HELL ON BRICK by WILLIAM CAMPBELL GAULT

25¢

Adventure

JAN.

DATU'S DIVIDEND

by

E. HOFFMANN PRICE

GIFF CHESHIRE

DAVE GRUBB

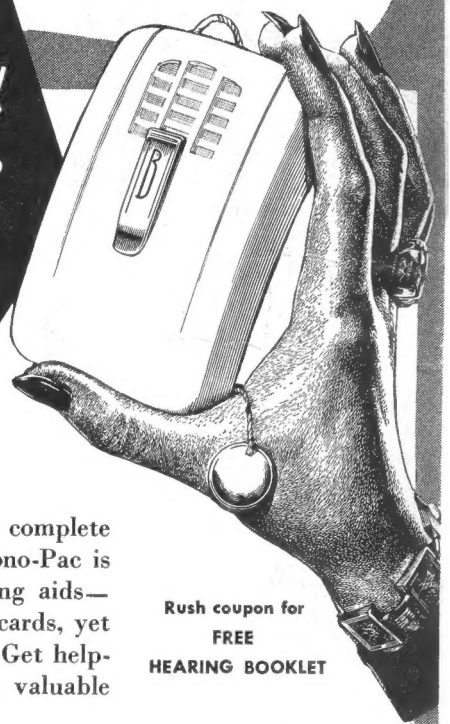
FRANCIS GOTT

JAN. 1947 ADVENTURE 25 Cents

Now! the One-Unit
HEARING AID
Thousands have waited for

The Sensational New One-Unit
Beltone
MONO-PAC
HEARING AID

More people wear Beltones than all other one-unit Hearing Aids COMBINED
Find Out WHY!



This is all you wear
No separate battery pack
No dangling battery wires

Yes—now you can wear a hearing aid with complete comfort and ease. The tiny new Beltone Mono-Pac is about ⅓ size and weight of old style hearing aids—actually little larger than a deck of playing cards, yet so powerful you hear even whispers clearly! Get helpful facts about this new "miracle" aid in valuable FREE book about deafness.

Rush coupon for FREE HEARING BOOKLET

BELTONE HEARING AID CO., Dept. MG-71 1450 W. 19th St., Chicago 8, Illinois

Mail Coupon Now!

VALUABLE BOOKLET FREE!

BELTONE HEARING AID CO., Dept. MG-71
1450 W. 19th St., Chicago 8, Illinois

Please rush new FREE booklet of interesting, scientific facts about deafness and what can be done to overcome it.

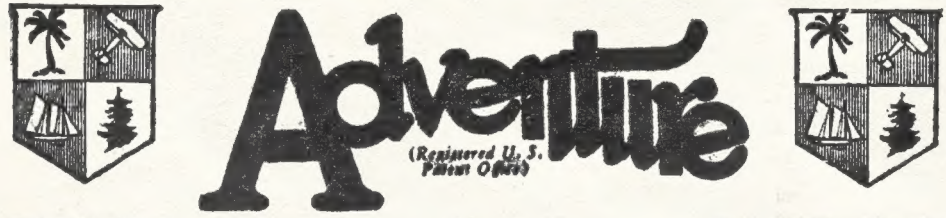
Name .....

Street .....

Town ..... *Zone* .... *State* .....

JIM DIVED INTO TROUBLE BUT THEN...
HELP! QUICK! SHE'LL DROWN!
EQUIPPED WITH FACE-MASK AND SPRING DRIVEN HARPOON, SUE DRISCOLL HAD ENJOYED HER FIRST TRY AT FLORIDA "GOGGLE-FISHING" UNTIL HER FRANTIC QUARRY SNARLED THE HARPOON LINE, TRAPPING HER IN DEEP WATER...
HOPE WE DON'T COME UP UNDER MY BOAT
SHE'LL BE OKAY NOW, BUT WE'D BETTER GET HER HOME
THAT'S OUR PLACE ON THE POINT
WHAT HAPPENED, SON?
SIS ALMOST DROWNED, BUT THIS MAN SAVED HER
I APPRECIATE THE INVITATION, SIR, BUT I'VE BEEN ROUGHING IT AND...
AS A GRATEFUL FATHER, I INSIST. LET'S GET YOU FRESHENED UP..
SHAVING'S A CINCH WITH THIS BLADE, SIR! MY FACE FEELS GREAT!
YES, THIN GILLETTES ARE PLENTY KEEN
..AND AFTER FOUR YEARS IN THE ARMY, I'M UNDECIDED ABOUT RETURNING TO WAYBURN U.
WAYBURN! WHY THAT'S MY SCHOOL. I DO HOPE YOU COME BACK
THAT THIN GILLETTE SHAVE TURNED THE TRICK
FOR QUICK EASY SHAVES...GOOD-LOOKING AND REFRESHING...USE THIN GILLETTES. THEY'RE THE KEENEST, LONGEST-LASTING BLADES IN THE LOW-PRICE FIELD. ALSO THEY FIT YOUR GILLETTE RAZOR TO A "T" AND PROTECT YOUR FACE FROM THE HARSH, IRRITATING EFFECT OF MISFIT BLADES. ASK FOR THIN GILLETTE BLADES
THIN Gillette BLADES
4 for 10¢

◆ ◆ ◆ **THE FEBRUARY ISSUE WILL**



Vol. 116, No. 3 **for** **Best of New Stories**

January, 1947

NOVELETTES

Hell on Brick ..... **WILLIAM CAMPBELL GAULT** **10**

Indianapolis on Decoration Day—the greatest speed classic on four wheels—the Big Grind—the 500! A hundred and sixty thousand frenzied race fans screaming their heads off as the hot irons roar by for the flying start. And out there on the brick, three guys, their destinies tied to the tail of a streaking comet powered by high-octane gas and sheer guts, undergoing the toughest test ever devised for man or motor.

Datu's Dividend ..... **E. HOFFMANN PRICE** **60**

Pete Barstow was only too glad to drink the General's whiskey and even commiserate with him on his imminent retirement. But when the old codger tried to enlist Pete's aid in the campaign against the Huks and their Philippine-style share-the-wealth plan, the ex-guerrilla said to hell with it. He'd stick to his own business. Of course when he returned to his rubber plantation and learned that he hadn't any business to stick to—the ill-advised *taos* had taken it over lock, stock and GI cans—that was a horse of another hue. Maybe the General had something after all.

SHORT STORIES

A Gentleman by Blood ..... **R. W. DALY** **34**

Captain Matchett, commanding His Majesty's seventy-four gun ship *Hector,* was in an unfortunate position. His crew hated him because he'd once been an ordinary seaman like themselves. His officers despised him since, because of his once lowly station, he was not a gentleman. At times he couldn't help wondering if the single epaulette he'd been given after the Battle of the Saints for outstanding bravery wasn't a crueler adornment to have to wear than the marks of the cat he'd been accustomed to before his quarterdeck days.

The Two Wheel Dream ..... **DAVE GRUBB** **42**

Folks in our town will never forget the time Two Bit McGinnis strained his genius to the busting point and came up with the Two Wheel Dream. There *was* a motor sackle! Ran on corn liquor and faith, it did, and that's not all—as we learned on the day of the great Trial Run.

Published monthly by Popular Publications, Inc., at 2256 Grove Street, Chicago, 16, Illinois. Editorial and Executive Offices, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. Henry Steeger, President and Secretary, Harold S. Goldsmith, Vice-President and Treasurer. Entered as second-class matter October 2, 1935, at the Post Office, at Chicago, Illinois, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Copyright, 1946, by Popular Publications, Inc. This issue is published simultaneously in the Dominion of Canada. Copyright under International Copyright Convention and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction, in whole or in part, in any form. Title registered in U. S. and Canadian Patent Offices. Single copy 25 cents. Annual subscription for U. S. A., its possessions and Canada, $2.50; other countries, 75c additional. Send subscriptions to 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. For advertising rates, address Sam J. Perry, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. When submitting manuscripts, enclose stamped, self-addressed envelope for their return, if found unavailable. The publishers will exercise care in the handling of unsolicited manuscripts, but assume no responsibility for their return. Any resemblance between any character appearing in fictional matter, and any person, living or dead, is entirely coincidental and unintentional. Printed in the U. S. A.

BE OUT ON JANUARY 10TH ◆ ◆ ◆

Permit to Kill.....WILLIAM LYNCH 48
The bush kangaroos around Yerranderie were protected by law but what are laws to a lad who's seen his pet sheep dog slashed to ribbons before his very eyes by a murdering marsupial?

Snafu Johnny.....FRANCIS GOTT 100
The Wyns of Spar Island were likable men, big-boned, dreamy-eyed and easy-going, but not one of them had ever made a sailor. Which nobody knew better than Captain Haskill. Now here was Johnny—the latest of the tribe to ship with the captain—inept as all the rest and labeled "jinx" by the crew of the *Merrydew* before she'd even passed Ambrose Light. Was he going to follow in the clumsy footsteps of all those Wyns who'd gone before or could it be that somewhere off the Azores . . . ?

A Bridge to the Future.....GIFF CHESHIRE 110
Twelve years had passed since young Kermit had gazed awe-struck at the great bridge Charlie Halversen was building and called it "the purtiest thing in the world." Now, of course, the famous engineer would have forgotten all about the kid and the letter he'd given him to help him get started when the time came to make his own way. But the kid didn't know his idol's memory was as long and strong as the steel spans he wove—or that Halversen cherished those words as a debt unpaid.

One More River.....GEORGE C. APPELL 116
It would be a glorious finish to Colonel Mackenzie's career to bring Satando back to the post in his saddlebags before retiring from the Service. For the colonel had a personal score to settle with the renegade. However, to an old soldier like Mackenzie, one thing made the glory-and-revenge combination pale to insignificance—attention to orders.

Champions Wear Purple.....CLIFTON ADAMS 124
Lee Robertson was a stranger in Oiltown, but once we'd seen him fight down at the Arena everybody knew he was the coming champ—the man to succeed his buddy Pete, who'd held the title till a German bullet dropped him for the long count. Everybody, that is, but Hank Winters who swore Lee could never fill Pete's shoes—or the robe that had been his mantle of ring greatness.

THE FACT STORY

The Spirit Wagon.....GLENN R. VERNAM 54
The convivial citizenry of Westport, Missouri were blissfully unaware, that sultry summer evening of '53, that they were about to witness a revolution in Western travel. And when Captain Thomas navigated his wonderful windwagon right up to the door of Yoakum's Tavern and cast anchor, there were still skeptics heard to remark that all the wind was not confined to the doughty skipper's astonishing conveyance.

VERSE

Winds of the World.....E. C. TOVEY 59
The winds are cruel, and the winds are kind—
They drive men mad and make them blind.

DEPARTMENTS

The Camp-Fire.....Where readers, writers and adventurers meet 6
Ask Adventure.....Information you can't get elsewhere 131
Ask Adventure Experts.....The men who furnish it 135
Lost Trails.....Where old paths cross 143
The Trail Ahead.....News of next month's issue 144

Cover Painted for Adventure by Rafael DeSoto
Kenneth S. White, Editor

THE CAMP-FIRE

Where Readers, Writers and Adventurers Meet

FOUR new names to add to the roster of our Writers' Brigade this month. First of the quartet of scrivener recruits is William Lynch who sent us "Permit to Kill" from "Down Under" a couple of months ago. Author of over two hundred and forty stories published in his native Australia his name is still comparatively unknown here in the United States. Mr. Lynch writes—

I was born in Mudgee, New South Wales, in 1914 and educated at St. Patrick's College, Goulburn and the University of Melbourne. I began writing at the age of twenty. Since then my writing career has followed much the same pattern, I imagine, as that of most other writers. First a continuous stream of rejection slips, then a couple of years of slugging along with an occasional break, finally the inevitable reward of persistency. Literary success comes slowly in Australia owing to small circulations and the scarcity of periodicals. It is, consequently, practically impossible for a free-lance writer to earn a living here without turning his hand to some other type of work on occasion. For instance—

Between yarns I have had to be, successively, grape-picker, gardener, sub-editor of a provincial weekly, proprietor of the same journal, lecturer in literature at a girls' finishing school, and sports coach at a seminary for juvenile delinquents among other things. With various odd press commissions in between I have travelled on foot through the length and breadth of Australia, particularly the western areas, of one of which I write in "Permit to Kill."

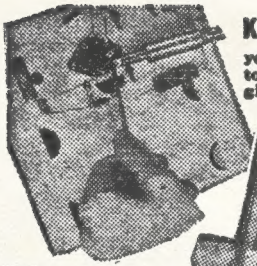
Send us some more yarns, Mr. Lynch, and we'll see what we can do about eliminating those grapes and juvenile delinquents from your future schedule. In other words, welcome to *Adventure*, and come again!

GLENN R. VERNAM, who gives us the amusing account of Captain Thomas and his prairie frigate on page 54, writes, on joining us for the first time—

I am just another one of the boys who are always breaking trail over the next hill. I have put in a lot of years scattering around over the West, chasing cow tails, skinning long-line outfits, following game trails and all the usual things common to the breed. I happened to have a great weakness for early Western history, and so spent considerable time snooping around in the tracks of the men who opened the country to civilization. These last few years, I have been trying to put some of the fascinating things I saw and heard about into print.

I first heard about the old Indian legend of the Spirit Wagon a good many years ago. It was over the wavering light of the Arkansas River. My informant was an old-time hunter, prospector, cowhand and what have you, who had lived among the Indians about as much as with the whites and had a fund of stories commensurate with his

(Continued on page 8)



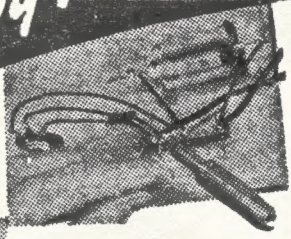
KIT 1 I send you Soldering Equipment and Radio Parts; show you how to do Radio soldering; how to mount and connect Radio parts; give you practical experience.

KIT 2 Early in my course I show you how to build this N. R. I. Tester with parts I send. It soon helps you fix neighborhood Radios and earn EXTRA money in spare time.

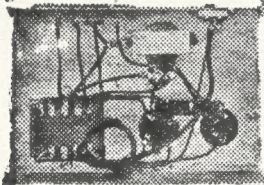
Be a RADIO Technician

Learn by PRACTICING in Spare Time

with 6 BIG KITS of RADIO PARTS I send you

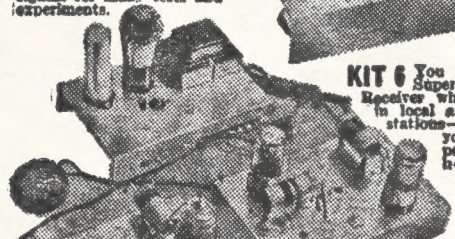


KIT 3 You get parts to build Radio Circuits; then test them; see how they work; learn how to design special circuits; how to locate and repair circuit defects.



KIT 4 You get parts to build this Vacuum Tube Power Pack; make changes which give you experience with packs of many kinds; learn to correct power pack troubles.

KIT 5 Building this A. M. Signal Generator gives you more valuable experience. It provides amplitude-modulated signals for many tests and experiments.



KIT 6 You build this Superheterodyne Receiver which brings in local and distant stations—and gives you more experience to help you win success in Radio.

My Course Includes Training in

TELEVISION • ELECTRONICS

FREQUENCY MODULATION

Do you want a good-pay job in the fast-growing Radio Industry—or your own Radio Shop? Mail the Coupon for a Sample Lesson and my 64-page book, "Win Rich Rewards in Radio," both FREE. See how I will train you at home—how you get practical Radio experience building, testing Radio circuits with 6 BIG KITS OF PARTS I send!

Many Beginners Soon Make Extra Money in Spare Time While Learning

The day you enroll I start sending EXTRA MONEY JOB SHEETS that show how to make EXTRA money fixing neighbors' Radios in spare time while still learning! It's probably easier to get started now than ever before, because the Radio Repair Business is booming. Trained Radio Technicians also find profitable opportunities in Police, Aviation, Marine Radio, Broadcasting, Radio Manufacturing, Public Address work. Think of even greater opportunities as Television, FM, and Electronic devices become available to the public! Send for FREE books now!

Find Out What NRI Can Do For You

Mail Coupon for Sample Lesson and my FREE 64-page book. Read the details about my Course; letters from men I trained; see how quickly, easily you can get started. No obligation! Just MAIL COUPON NOW in envelope or paste on penny postal.

J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 7AS9, National Radio Institute, *Pioneer Home Study Radio School,* **Washington 9, D. C.**

Sample Lesson 64 Page Book **FREE**

Mr. J. E. SMITH, President
Dept. 7AS9, National Radio Institute
Washington 9, D. C.

Mail me FREE, Sample Lesson and 64-page book. (No salesman will call. Please write plainly.)

Name..... Age....

Address .....

City..... State.....

(Please include Post Office zone number)

Approved for Training under GI Bill

(Continued from page 6)

years and gift of gab. I absorbed this yarn, not thinking much in particular about it at the time. Later, I heard another reference to it among another group of old-timers. Then I stumbled onto the tale of the sailor and his Windwagon. An account of it was published in the Kansas City *Star and Southwest Review* of August 6, 1905. Not long ago, I ran across a reference to both the old legend and the Windwagon yarn in Stanley Vestal's book on the Old Santa Fe Trail. In consequence, I shuffled the whole thing together and wrote "The Spirit Wagon." If Thomas had a first name, I am sorry to say that I never learned it. It seems as obscure as his earlier and later history. So I just called him Captain Thomas and let it go at that. I'd be interested to hear from anyone who knows the old guy's whole name or any additional facts about him.

So would we! The whiskered skipper of Mr. Vernam's reminiscence has already become one of our favorite historical characters. A nonesuch if there ever was one! Can't anyone add a line to his portrait?

GEORGE C. APPELL, whose stirring story of the U. S. Cavalry—pre-mechanization—occurs on page 116, introduces himself and his tale thuswise on mustering in—

I recently finished five years of soldiering in the infantry. Enlisted as a bucktail private and came out a captain, after going through Africa, invading Sicily, spending ten months in hospital, taking a language course, going to the Orient, and finally serving with the Chinese Combat Command. I first handled guns professionally in 1937 when I was a Federal Marshal in Puerto Rico. Since 1934, when graduated from Nichols College, I've been in and out of newspaper, radio, advertising and publicity work and have contributed to magazines. Military history is my preoccupation, breeding spaniels my hobby.

"One More River" is part of the story of Colonel Ronald Mackenzie, who commanded the 4th Cavalry in the Department of Arizona during the 70's. His brother, Captain William Mackenzie of the Navy, smashed an incipient mutiny in 1842 when he hanged Midshipman Philip Spencer from a yardarm. Spencer was the son of the Secretary of War; the Mackenzies were a hard family. "One More River" is also a glimpse of what salty soldiering was like on a volunteer basis in those days; today, with everything except caviar in bed for breakfast, the soldiers beef about an officer's scowl. Some of them should have had Mackenzie.

The Colonel's Mexican invasion was followed four years later by a near-mutiny in the Army when Congress failed to appropriate pay for the services. That one called for an iron fist and a fair strike, but Mackenzie, of course, came through. And without benefit of USO either.

Speaking of Philip Spencer and that incipient mutiny back in 1842, we know you'll be interested in Oliver Hazard Perry's article detailing the story. "No Sword at His Side" is scheduled for next month and we fully expect it to beget a plethora of controversial correspondence. For instance: Mr. Perry writes, "I daresay there will be some indignant letters forthcoming on publication of my article. Spencer was the founder of Chi Psi fraternity at Union College in Schenectady and the brothers look on him as a martyr. They celebrated some sort of centennial in his honor a few years ago." (Get your powder dried, Chi Psi's and your pistols primed. We're ready to duck—if we have to.)

AND Clifton Adams, whose "Champions Wear Purple" appears on page 124, beats out the following on his first appearance in these pages—

Upon completing a somewhat sporadic high school education, armed with two years experience as a drummer in a high school band, I high-tailed it to the West Coast to place the name of Adams beside the Jazz Greats. (At that time Jazz Greats were standing four deep on the corner of 5th and Main.)

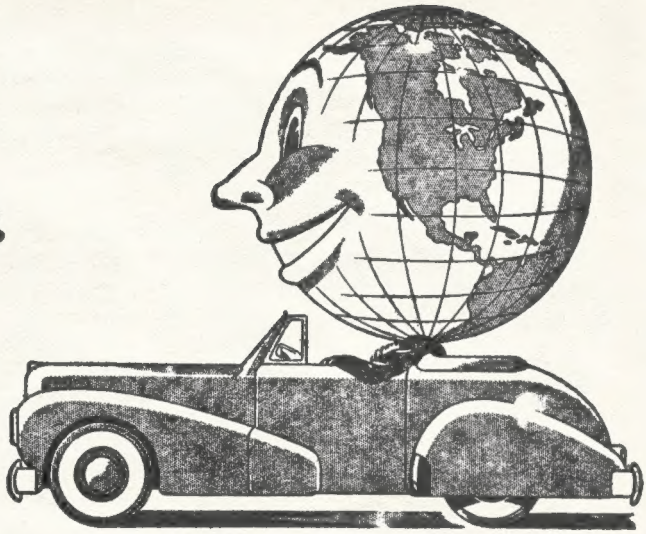
That first year I washed dishes, solicited laundry orders, solicited magazine subscriptions, and washed more dishes. But the virtue of perseverance will out. The second year opportunity came a-knocking. True, it wasn't a loud knock, maybe just a tap, but the important thing was that I had a job in music. Playing drums in a Main Street honkey tonk, receiving my daily pay of two bucks, a quart of Tokay wine, and the *kitty*. But a year of these seven-a-week ten-hour days (and the Tokay wine) paid off one collapsed lung, the other wheezing badly. After that, some months reclining in various chest hospitals.

In the hospital I did a lot of reading. Finally I got tired of reading and started writing. This sort of thing went on until the Japs started the fracas at Pearl Harbor. Things happened fast. When I had time to look around I discovered I was a radio operator in the 8th Armored Division. There was a quick shuffle and a new deal. I found myself with the 2nd Armored Division in Africa. I tagged along with the Second Armored as it meandered through Africa, England, and a whole helluva slew of European countries. Noisy in Europe, wasn't it?

But about the story, "Champions Wear Purple." As far as I know it isn't true—but it *could* be. The greater part of my

(Continued on page 137)

PUTTING THE WORLD ON WHEELS



THAT'S the achievement of the American motor car industry, this year celebrating its Golden Jubilee. Graduates and students of 55-year-old I.C.S. have played quite a part in the 50 years of automotive progress.

The I.C.S. contributors to the motor revolution include . . . the founder and builder of the second largest car manufacturing concern . . . a long-time production chief of another "Big 3" corporation . . . the chief engineer of an organization producing one of the most famous of the high-priced cars . . . the designer of the first all-steel body.

In every other leading industry, you'll find men who have studied I.C.S. Courses serving with equal distinction. They applied their ambition and intelligence to obtaining essential *training*. Do *you* have these qualities? Then I.C.S. can help you with the training you need to get to the top.

Mail the coupon—as so many successful men have done. Do it *now!*

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

ICS

BOX 3279-W, SCRANTON 9, PENNA.

Without cost or obligation, please send me full particulars about the course *before* which I have marked X:

Air Conditioning and Plumbing Courses
- ☐ Air Conditioning
- ☐ Heating ☐ Plumbing
- ☐ Refrigeration ☐ Steam Fitting

Chemistry Courses
- ☐ Chemical Engineering
- ☐ Chemistry, Analytical
- ☐ Chemistry, Industrial
- ☐ Chemistry, Mfg. Iron & Steel
- ☐ Petroleum Refining ☐ Plastics
- ☐ Pulp and Paper Making

Civil Engineering, Architectural and Mining Courses
- ☐ Architectural Drafting
- ☐ Architecture
- ☐ Bridge and Building Foreman
- ☐ Building Estimating
- ☐ Civil Engineering
- ☐ Coal Mining
- ☐ Contracting and Building
- ☐ Highway Engineering
- ☐ Lumber Dealer
- ☐ Reading Structural Blueprints
- ☐ Sanitary Engineering
- ☐ Structural Drafting
- ☐ Structural Engineering
- ☐ Surveying and Mapping

Communications Courses
- ☐ Electronics
- ☐ Practical Telephony
- ☐ Radio, General
- ☐ Radio Operating
- ☐ Radio Servicing
- ☐ Telegraph Engineering

Electrical Courses
- ☐ Electrical Drafting
- ☐ Electrical Engineering
- ☐ Electric Light and Power
- ☐ Lighting Technician
- ☑ Practical Electrician

Internal Combustion Engines Courses
- ☐ Auto Technician ☐ Aviation
- ☑ Diesel-Electric
- ☐ Diesel Engines ☐ Gas Engines

Mechanical Courses
- ☐ Aeronautical Engineering
- ☐ Aircraft Drafting
- ☐ Flight Engineer
- ☐ Foundry Work
- ☑ Heat Treatment of Metals
- ☐ Industrial Engineering
- ☐ Industrial Metallurgy
- ☐ Machine Shop
- ☐ Mechanical Drafting
- ☐ Mechanical Engineering
- ☐ Mold-Loft Work
- ☐ Patternmaking—Wood, Metal
- ☐ Reading Shop Blueprints
- ☐ Sheet-Metal Drafting
- ☐ Sheet-Metal Worker
- ☐ Ship Drafting ☐ Ship Fitting
- ☐ Tool Designing
- ☐ Toolmaking
- ☐ Welding—Gas and Electric

Railroad Courses
- ☐ Air Brake ☐ Car Inspector
- ☐ Diesel Locomotive
- ☐ Locomotive Engineer
- ☐ Locomotive Fireman
- ☐ Railroad Section Foreman

Steam Engineering Courses
- ☐ Boilermaking
- ☐ Combustion Engineering
- ☐ Engine Running
- ☐ Marine Engineering
- ☐ Steam Electric ☐ Steam Engines

Textile Courses
- ☐ Cotton Manufacturing
- ☐ Rayon Weaving
- ☐ Textile Designing
- ☐ Woolen Manufacturing

Business and Academic Courses
- ☐ Accounting ☐ Advertising
- ☐ Arithmetic ☐ Bookkeeping
- ☐ Business Correspondence
- ☐ Business Management
- ☐ Certified Public Accounting
- ☐ Commercial
- ☑ Cost Accounting
- ☐ Federal Tax
- ☐ First Year College
- ☐ Foremanship ☐ French
- ☐ Good English ☐ High School
- ☐ Higher Mathematics
- ☐ Illustrating ☐ Motor Traffic
- ☑ Postal Service
- ☐ Salesmanship ☐ Secretarial
- ☐ Sign Lettering
- ☐ Spanish ☐ Stenography
- ☐ Traffic Management

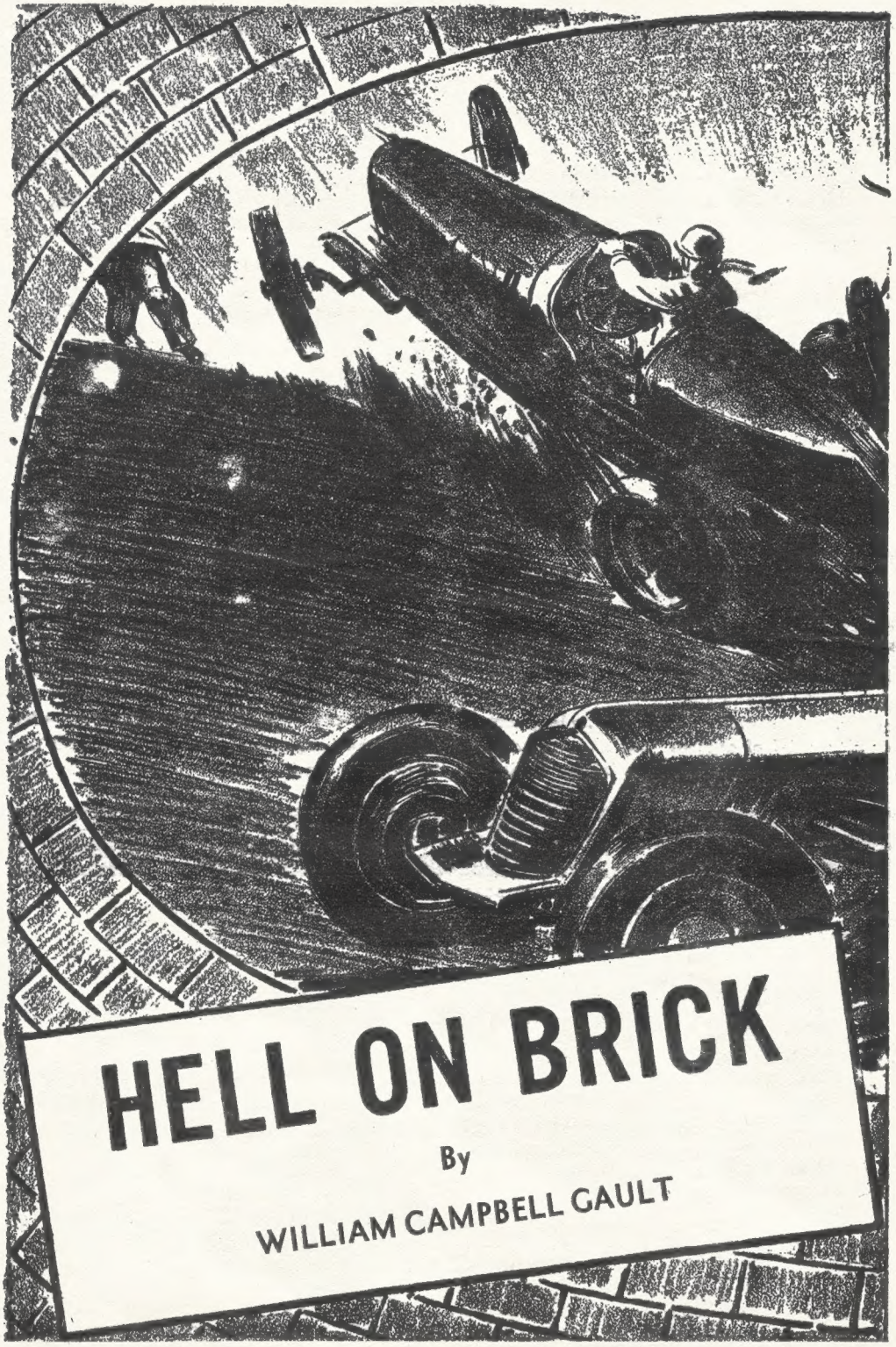
*Name*_____ *Age*_____ *Home Address*_____

*City*_____ *State*_____ *Present Position*_____

*Working Hours*_____ *A.M. to*_____ *P.M.* **Length of Service in World War II**_____

Special tuition rates to members of the Armed Forces. Enrollment under the G.I. Bill of Rights approved for War II Veterans.

Canadian residents send coupon to International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Ltd., Montreal, Canada.



HELL ON BRICK

By

WILLIAM CAMPBELL GAULT

The left front of the Special caught Regan's deck, and they went over the bank together.

ILLUSTRATED BY
JOHN MEOLA

I NEVER considered Johnny a prodigy. Some people did, and do, I know—and with reason—but I'd been too close to him all along, and worked with him. I did, however, consider him *one* of the best mechanics in the world and *the* best driver. A private opinion, and subject to correction, as Johnny always said.

He got a lot of publicity when he was sixteen. He put a D-O head on a Model A block in a little job he had and they clocked him at 138.42 m.p.h. on a straight run. The papers

played it up as though it was a hashed-up job he'd picked off the scrap pile. Which was just malarkey, of course. The fact that his dad was the leading Triple-A pilot at the time made it good ink, and the scribes weren't too fussy about accuracy.

We were amateurs then, on the dry lake circuit, and D-O's just weren't cricket. That's big league stuff, professional stuff. I had a Model A in the roadster class with a Winfield head, and she'd turn better than 107 miles an hour. Johnny's regular job was a Chev with an Olds three port head. Those are within the amateur limits we had, and this D-O of Johnny's was just a publicity stunt. But that's when they began to think he was a prodigy.

Well, that was 1936, and lots has happened since. Johnny and I left the amateurs in '39 which was Johnny's last year in M.I.T. I'd gone to Purdue, and the summer of '39 we hit the dirt tracks together.

We did all right. I hotted 'em up and Johnny wheeled 'em, and it was rough, and sometimes it was ugly, and always it was uncertain. But it was speed, and they call it a sort of narcotic, maybe, but it was speed we wanted. That and the thrill of wheedling another r.p.m. out of a motor that was delivering more revs than she had already.

I'm no psychologist, so I can't analyze the thrill for you. There are millionaires in this game, and graduate engineers and back alley mechs and just plain bums. They all love it, and they live by it and they die by it. At one time it was the proving ground for the motor car industry, but those days are past. The manufacturers have their own proving grounds now, but the game goes on.

To get back to Johnny. In 1940, he had built up quite a name. The son of a famous driver making good on his own and like that . . . Publicity never hurt, and Johnny got a kick out of it. It was when he began to believe it that I got worried.

Then, in July of 1940, while we were racing at Fulford, Johnny got this telegram. His dad had been killed at Arcola.

I went to the train with him, and saw him off. I saw him at the funeral—and that was the last time for years.

This guy Hitler was beginning to talk louder and faster and I could see what was coming. I signed up, a year before Pearl Harbor. The Air Corps was what I wanted. So, naturally, I got the Infantry. I griped and grumbled and groaned. I also walked, and lived rather unpleasantly, and cursed my branch of the service, and wondered what was wrong with my IQ. And finished, knowing I wouldn't have traded at any time with anybody in the world.

Even with Johnny, who was one of the top ten aces in the Air Corps and a celebrated figure, to use a worn phrase.

And then it was spring, and I was readjusted to sport coats and slacks and what brands of better whiskey were still available. I was restless.

Jane, my sis, was living with me, and worrying about me.

"You should find a job," she said.

"I know it." I looked at her. She was wearing slacks and a mannish jacket, and on her it's lovely. "I know it," I repeated, "but what? Not some office, where any ideas I may get would be credited to the firm and the boss. Not a garage, that's too tame. Not a proving ground, that's too routine."

She examined her nails. She yawned. "Go on."

"Well . . ." I said.

"But who'd drive for you?" she asked.

"Sharpie, aren't you?" I said. "Psychic."

She grinned. "Rick Temple, I can read you like a newspaper."

"O.K.," I said. "That's your brother, the perpetual adolescent."

"I don't mind," she said. "I like you, just the way you are."

"If the orchestra will now play *Hearts And Flowers,*" I said, "we will do a fade-out, going hand in hand down the trail, facing the future together bravely."

She threw a book at me but it was a small book.

"I wonder," I said, "just what happened to Johnny Dale?"

"He's in Indianapolis," Jane said, "working for the Calvin Carburetor people, and doing very well."

I sat up straighter. "He writes to you?"

"Occasionally."

I looked at her closely. "Hey, is that—I mean, the old heartbeat, and moonlight over the water, and—"

"He is engaged to an Indianapolis girl whose father just happens to be president of the firm. Her name is Marion Calvin, and she is beautiful and talented and understanding—and will some day come into about a million dollars."

All this in a monotone, a faintly cynical monotone, I thought.

I said, "Kid, I'm sorry. I didn't mean—"

She sniffed, a little. She said, "I think I'll go out and see how the sprinkler is working."

I SAT there, alone in the cottage, alone with my thoughts, such as they were. I remembered all the afternoons, the dusty afternoons before the war, when we'd campaigned the grit rings together. I remembered our dreams, and the big dream. The big dream had been Indianapolis—and the 500.

Well, Johnny was in Indianapolis now. Punching a clock for Calvin Carburetor. And probably getting fat. Oh, hell . . .

Jane came back in. "I moved the sprinkler," she said.

"Fine," I said. "We'll have a lawn to be proud of."

She picked up a magazine.

"He should be twenty-five," I said. "That's not old."

"He may not be old," Jane said, "but he's settled, and stop dreaming those dreams, my mechanized knight."

"Settled," I said. "That's not good. Let's go and unsettle him."

She stared at me with her bright, suspiciously bright, blue eyes. "Are you crazy, Rick Temple?"

"No more than usual."

"Well, just relax. Johnny is very well situated."

"He'll get smug," I said, "and stuffy. He'll become an after-dinner speaker and a viewer-with-alarm. He'll get fat and stupid and reactionary. He'll have a chauffeur."

"Not Johnny," she said. "Not ever."

There was something in the voice besides certainty, and I thought I detected another sniff. I thought I had better shut up. I did.

But I couldn't stop thinking. Of the music they make when they're right, like a symphony. Of the smell of oil, hot, and sometimes the odor of castor, which a few of them still use. And I thought of that ridge near the outer rail, that treacherous dust piled up there by the early running. That's where death rides, on the outer rail. I thought of the drivers' wives, knitting, in the stands. Knitting, and probably praying a little, too, and wondering where the trail ends. But not quitting, not the good ones.

I thought of Johnny, the front runner, getting out in front and staying there, all the way, making a breeze of it. And I thought of Johnny, starting in the ruck, and then coming through in the last few laps to make the stands scream and to add a few more gray hairs to the pilots' skulls. Oh, Johnny . . . Oh, hell . . .

Jane said, "If you're through dreaming, how about going out for supper? How about getting some barbecued spareribs?"

We live in Los Angeles, and Los Angeles has the finest barbecued meat in the world. So I said, "Let's," and forgot about Johnny Dale. For almost an hour.

After the barbecue we went to a movie, and after the movie we came home and played gin rummy and some of the gang dropped in, and then we played poker.

Through it all, I kept remembering Johnny. Major Johnny Dale, of the A.A.F., now a civilian like myself.

The next day I drove out to Muroc, just to see what the kids were doing, if anything. Muroc is a dried-up lake, and we'd always used it for our go-buggies. But the Army had taken it over during the war, and I didn't know if the speed-crazy kids had come back to it yet. They had. And also the Harper Dry lake, near Barstow.

They organized now, though, and called it the Southern California Timing Association. They had a timer, an electric timer, which had proved to have an error of only one thousandth of a second in a twenty-four hour run. They were doing all right.

I saw everything out there, from Model T's with rocker arms to sleek irons that could only have been financed by a rich papa. I looked back nine years and saw myself.

When I came back to the cottage, Jane said, "Don't tell me where you've been. I can see it in your eyes."

"If you will allow me to make a prophetic statement," I said, by way of making a prophetic statement, "those kids out there are keeping the world safe, and having a lot of fun doing it."

"Go on, Senator," she said.

"When it comes to motors, when it comes to anything mechanical, they are the tops for their age and weight."

"Maybe," she said, "they'll all wind up in the Infantry."

I ignored this. I said, "In a week, they'll be running at Indianapolis, the kids of my day, some of them who learned right out there at Muroc years ago. Why don't we go and see what they do?"

"You mean why don't we go and see Johnny?"

"And the race, too. Five hundred miles of thrilling speed, the mecca of every top-notch pilot in the nation."

"You should do publicity," she said.

"Kid," I said, "would it hurt too much?"

"No," she said. "No, it wouldn't. Only it would take some time to get ready, and we'd never make it. Most of the tickets are sold already, I'll bet."

"All right," I said, "let's just go and see Johnny, then. If he's doing all right, I won't even suggest racing to him. We'll just talk about old times."

She shook her head sadly. "If *he's* doing all right. Probably due to inherit Calvin Carburetor and *you* worry about *him*."

"Let's go and see," I repeated.

"All right," she agreed. "And then you'll look for a job, won't you, Rick? We'll both get a job, after that."

"Sure," I promised. "Sure."

She took her time about closing up the house and getting some clothes she "just had to have." I knew why; because she wanted me to get there too late for the race. She knew I'd be lost, if I saw that. She took her time, and I fretted, and finally we were ready to go.

I had three days, and I thought I'd out-

foxed her, because this old Dusy of mine will wind up, considering it's over ten years old.

It wound up very well. I was only doing a hundred and twelve when that valve burned up. On the desert, that was.

Garage facilities, out there, in the middle of nowhere, aren't just what they should be, and it took three days. It was a grand race, and I heard parts of it over the radio.

CHAPTER II

SPEEDWAY SOUP

WE CAME into Indianapolis the first part of June. It was morning, and Johnny would probably be at work, so we drove out to the Calvin plant. Jane waited in the car while I went in to look up Johnny.

He wasn't very hard to find. There was an impressive sign on his door: *John Harrison Dale—Vice President in Charge of Engineering.*

That "Harrison" hurt. I thought I would be too late. Well, there was something to be said for both sides.

He wasn't fat. And he was glad to see me. "Rick!" he said. "Well, I'll be damned. Boy, this is a pleasant surprise."

That was one side. On the other side, his shyness was gone, but I suppose I should have expected that. And that engaging cockiness he had during '39 was a kind of mature assurance, now. And he was tailored a little too much on the conservative side, I thought. But, of course, I'm from L.A.

"I've been thinking about you," he said.

"And me you. How was the 500?"

"Great, I guess. I—didn't see it."

That didn't register, at first. "You mean you didn't see it from the pits? You had to sit in the grandstand? With your drag?"

"I didn't see it at all. Who won?"

I could only stare. "Superman," I said, finally, "on a bicycle."

He looked down at his desk.

"Johnny," I said, "you're kidding. You can change your name to John Harrison Dale, but you can't fool me. It's a gag, huh?"

He flushed, I thought. He said, "That John Harrison wasn't my idea. Mr. Calvin thought it would look better. I didn't see the 500, Rick. I haven't seen an automobile race since 1940, since that day—" And he didn't say any more about that.

I said, "Oh."

I thought about Johnny the First, Triple-A dirt track champ of his day, who'd never copped on the bricks, who'd passed his skill and his courage onto this Johnny and died in the dust at Arcola.

Johnny's voice broke through. "What do you think of it?"

I realized he'd been talking, and he had a blueprint on the desk before him. I looked at it. It was a carburetor, a dual downdraft job. It was sweet, with the flow equalized as close to evenly as possible.

"The new Calvin?" I asked.

Just a shade of the old shyness was in his grin. "That's what I'd hoped, but I guess not. I just wanted your opinion. I value it."

"Yours?" I asked.

He nodded.

"It's one of the sweetest pots I've ever seen," I told him. "What's the rub?"

"It's a complicated business," he said, "and it would only bore you. Have you had lunch?"

"No," I said, "and Jane has been waiting patiently in the car all this time. Let's go and eat."

"Sure," he said. "I've got to meet Marion at 12:30 and you can meet her, too. You'll like her. You'll both like her."

Hmmm, I thought, but said nothing.

Well, I didn't dislike her. She was blond and slim and fairly tall, and beautiful. She was extremely agreeable, which could have been a product of her background, and not any particular affection for the Temples. We all got along very well.

It was an excellent lunch, too, at one of the town's better clubs.

"We're all so proud of John," Marion said. "The way he's worked into the firm and buckled down to work, after all the publicity he had, is really amazing."

Jane and I smiled. Johnny looked uncomfortable.

"He's contributed so much," Marion went on, "to the firm, and Dad's proud of him, too."

"I'm sure he has," I murmured. "And your dad has every right to be proud of him. He's a fine engineer."

"We were a little worried for a while, Dad and I," Marion added. "We thought our John might not settle down." She gave him that hope chest look. "But he conquered that, didn't you, John? We conquered it together."

It wouldn't be so hard to dislike this girl, I was beginning to think. With a little practice, I could manage it.

Johnny said, "I imagine all the boys were restless for a while, dear." And to me, "How about you, Rick?"

"A little," I said, "but I'll get over it."

"He's going to get to work soon," Jane put in.

I gave her my brotherly look 62-A, semi-paternal. "If I can find a driver," I said, "I'll be getting to work. And if I can't, I'll drive myself. I've got some ideas I want to try out."

"Back to the tracks?" Johnny asked.

I nodded. I realized Jane was looking disappointed (and lovely) and that I hadn't taken the best moment to broach this sudden decision. But though it was born on an impulse,

it strengthened during the rest of the lunch. That was for me.

The talk sort of died down. It had lost something. But Marion suggested, "Why don't we all go out together tonight? We haven't danced for ages, John."

We all agreed that would be a lot of fun.

IT DIDN'T start out that way. We were strained during the beginning of the evening, and the conversation was what is called desultory. The drinks helped, later.

One of the drinks was a concoction named "Speedway Soup" and a tribute, probably, to the local track. I tried it, just for the laugh.

It was really pleasant. I didn't realize how potent it was until I got up to dance with Jane. I was forced to dance very carefully and give it all of my attention. The floor kept reaching for me.

I explained to the others, when we returned to the table, what a flavorful, nourishing drink it was.

They all agreed to try it.

The girls didn't like it too well, and drank only one. But Johnny agreed with me that it was well worth concentrating on. Which we did, more or less, though not incautiously, as they say.

I don't know what time it was that Johnny began to become talkative. I do remember that it was near midnight when he began to talk about his new carburetor.

"Despite Mr. Calvin's views," Johnny announced solemnly, "it is the finest carburetor on the market today."

"But it isn't on the market," Marion pointed out reasonably. "And it's not likely to be. As Dad has explained so many times, our current model is selling very well, and there's no reason to change, now."

Which all made sense, even to me.

Johnny took another sip of his drink. "It may not be produced by Calvin, but it's unfair of you, dear, to think that's the only manufacturer in the field."

"John!" she said, as though he'd uttered some sacrilege.

I saw what might be coming. I said placatingly, "You really can't expect that the whole plant will be re-tooled immediately, Johnny, just to go into production on an untried carburetor."

"Can't I?" he said.

This was the Johnny who in '40 was beginning to believe his own press raves. This was the ex-major AAF, now.

I said, "I'm no businessman, but it seems logical to me that all progress in the field must come slowly, and after sufficient experimentation." Lord, I was sounding pompous.

"Progress?" Marion asked. "Do *you* believe John's carburetor is superior to our present product?"

"I'm not familiar with your present product," I hedged, like a politician.

"You are familiar with John's new pet?"

I nodded.

"Would you tell us what you think of it?"

I shrugged. "I'd rather not," I said.

She misunderstood that. I think Johnny did, too. He stared at me.

Marion thought she had won her point, I'm sure. She asked, "You're an engineer, Rick?"

I nodded. "Purdue—'38."

"And you don't think much of the new carburetor?"

I was about to make an enemy, but the truth—you know, the engineer's code. I said, "You've all misunderstood me. I don't mean that at all. It looks to me, on paper, like the finest carburetor I've never seen."

There was one of those silences, those uncomfortable silences.

Johnny didn't need to say anything. His expression said plainly, "See, what did I tell you?"

Jane pretended to be absorbed in her drink. Marion decided on a strategic retreat. "If that's the case, I'm going to talk to Dad about it. He'll see it your way eventually, John."

"He never will, honey. He designed the Calvin, and as inventor, he's getting the royalties. He'd be cutting his own throat."

This was embarrassingly plain talk, but Marion was equal to it.

"He'd still make the profit on the new one," she pointed out. "You developed it on the company's time, didn't you?"

"No," Johnny said. "His only profit would be the regular manufacturer's profit. I developed it on my own time, and the royalties would be mine."

Marion's smile was very, very gracious. "Well, we'll figure something out. Let's not spoil the party with shop talk."

The party was already spoiled. We broke up about one, and I promised to look up Johnny the next day.

AS WE drove back to the hotel, Jane said, "She's pretty, and she has a perfect figure, but I don't know. I don't know—"

"She's got the mind of a drill sergeant," I said. "John Harrison Dale will be guided gently but firmly into the path of prosperity and normalcy."

"Is that bad?" Jane asked.

"I guess not," I said. "I've never had much experience with either one, so I wouldn't be a judge."

"You're all right," she consoled me. "I like you."

"And John Harrison Dale?"

"That's unfair," she said. "It isn't worthy of an answer."

"O.K. I'm sorry. But I'd just like you to know that you needn't worry. You're pretty and you have excellent taste and you'd make a wife any man can be proud of. If not Johnny, somebody with more sense. You're one hundred per cent."

"And you," Jane said, "are a little drunk."

Which could be, but I still meant it.

"Let's start home tomorrow," Jane said. "I'm worried about the lawn."

I knew she wasn't. I knew why she wanted to leave. "O.K.," I said. "I'll run out and explain it to Johnny in the morning."

But in the morning, Johnny wasn't at the office. I asked for, and was given, his home address.

It was an apartment building, and after the buzzer admitted me, I walked up a flight, to be met by Johnny at his apartment door. He had a serious expression on his lean face.

"Trouble?" I asked.

He shook his head. "I—didn't feel like going to the office this morning. Those drinks last night—"

"Uh-huh," I said. "Well, I think we'll head for home. I came here with a campaign in mind, but—"

"To get me back to the track?" Johnny asked.

I admitted it with a nod.

"I've been thinking about it, all night," he said.

"So have I," I said. "I've been thinking about an iron called the Dale Downdraft Special. I was thinking it could build up quite a rep for your carburetor, enough to bring some backers, some wealthy backers. Especially if we copped the big one."

He put a hand on my arm. "Rick, you're talking through your hat. You don't think it would work, do you?"

"I'm no businessman," I said for the second time in twelve hours, "but many who are nothing but businessmen think very highly of the track for sales promotion. Especially here, in the big one."

Johnny looked doubtful. He looked out the window, and back at me, saying nothing.

"You've got a set-up, here," I warned him. "You've got a job and a future and a good-looking girl."

"The girl," he said quietly, "is all that matters. That's why I want to make my own way, Rick. That's why I've thought about going back. I want her to know I don't need her father."

"Would you still have her if you quit papa now?"

He nodded. "This is the real thing, for both of us." He was silent again, considering all the angles, probably.

Again, he asked, "But would racing do it? It's not like the old days, you know, Rick."

"All right. We make it go. We cop some grinds. If they begin to think it's the carburetors, we'll sell a few, for racing cars only, at first. That can be done, can't it?"

Johnny nodded. "There's a little shop right here in town where I can have them made in limited quantities."

"So, the more winning cars we sell them to, the bigger rep the pot will get. We sell them only to boys with first-class equipment. From there on, it's a gamble. Just like anything else, like living."

He was thoughtful again. He might have been thinking that his present life was no gamble, or at least with a minimum of risk. The gravy boat, and he must have hated to get off it.

Finally, he said, "We can try it. I'll go explain it all to Marion. I'll meet you here, this afternoon."

"At four o'clock?" I suggested.

"At four o'clock," he said.

I took Jane to lunch, and after lunch I took her out to show her the speedway, which she'd never seen.

It's an impressive sight, even deserted, as it was now. Two and half miles of banked, brick track, originally designed for 68 miles an hour, but even the first race, in 1911, had exceeded that. The bricks are covered with some macadam-like preparation now, excepting for the third of the track closest to the inner rail.

Jane said, "Two hundred times around that for the big one, huh?"

"That's right. It used to be rougher than it is. Those bricks were bumpy, at high speed, and they'd get an oil slick on them, and toward the end of the race, they were treacherous."

"A lot of bricks," she said.

I looked smug. I felt like a host to the visiting firemen. "Three million, two hundred thousand," I said impressively, "and one of them is gold, though they've forgotten which one."

Jane said, "Hmmm," and I didn't know if she was impressed or not.

I said, "It doesn't look like so much, now, but imagine a hundred and sixty thousand people here, jammed in the stands and through the infield. Imagine thirty-three cars costing anywhere up to forty thousand dollars each, roaring around for the flying start."

"With Johnny on the pole?" she asked.

"And me in the pits, pit manager, big operator."

"I'm scared," she said.

"Wait'll you see the dirt tracks," I told her, "then you'll have a reason to be."

She looked at me, and shook her head sadly and we went back to the car. "I won-

der," she said, "what Johnny's answer will be?"

So did I. I drove her back to the hotel, then went to Johnny's.

HE DIDN'T look too comfortable when I arrived at his apartment. But he was packing.

He asked, "You got anything lined up?"

"No," I said, "how about somebody in town here. It's a logical spot to pick up an iron."

He looked doubtful. "This mech that makes my carburetors has a D-O four, but he might want a lot of hay for it."

"Well," I said, "we can ask. We can gear her down for the dirt tracks, and when we bring her back here next spring—"

"Easy," he said, with some of that old grin returned. "You're taking in a lot of time."

I didn't look at him. "How much time have you got?"

"Six months." It sounded like a sentence, or a parole.

"We'll see," I said, "and we'll hope." Which was just words, because if we were going to swing it at all, it would take the big one, and that meant next May.

He left his bags half packed, and we drove over to the little shop that made his carburetors.

It was small, but it was a big-time shop just the same. I could tell that by the tools he had, and I could tell it by the black and chromium go-buggy stored in one corner.

The hood was off. I looked at the motor, and said, "That's for us."

Johnny nudged me. The proprietor was a dark, little man and his eyes weren't missing anything. Nor his ears.

Johnny said, "It's probably O.K. for the speedway here, but I don't know about those grit rings. We'd have to gear her down, and the purses in the hinterland don't pay for equipment like this."

It wasn't purses we were after, but prestige. I said nothing.

"She looks deck-heavy, too," Johnny said, "and that's murder on the dirt. The rubber's kind of shot."

The little mech just smiled. "When you get through running her down, the price will still be seven thousand smackers."

I gulped.

Johnny said, "That's a lot of money, Mike."

"That's a lot of car. I know, I put her together from the ground up. She's not deck-heavy, and geared down, she'll make a killing on the dirt. She's got all you'll ever need, anywhere. If I didn't need the money, you couldn't have her at all. She's my life's blood."

Johnny said. "Would she take those pots of mine without too much work?"

Mike nodded. "Those pots of yours are all right. They're better than any I've ever seen, and I've seen 'em all."

Johnny looked at me. "How much money can you get, in a hurry?"

"Three thousand."

"And that's about my limit, even as vice-president in charge of engineering. And we'll need some of it for expenses."

Mike came back into the conversation. He said, "I don't know if this is a closed corporation or not, but I've got an idea."

We both looked at him. I liked what I saw.

He was smiling. "That talk about purses didn't fool me none. I know what you boys are after, and I'd like in. Why don't we organize the Dale Downdraft Carburetor Company right here and now?"

I looked at Johnny and Johnny looked at me, and then we both looked at Mike, and Johnny nodded.

So it was arranged. Without papers, with nothing but a handshake all around, and with a lot of hope.

When it was agreed, Mike said musingly, "You know, I worked for Marmon and Stutz and Duesenberg, all right here in town. And all of them out of the automobile business now. You think I might be a jinx?"

"I'll be the jinx, if anybody," Johnny said.

YOU GET THEM ALL IN
LHS PIPES
CERTIFIED
PUREX
at your dealer's
Check List of Pipe Value
IMPORTED BRIAR BOWL (vita-fused for sweetness) ✓
ALUMINUM SAFETY LOCK ✓
ALUMINUM MOISTURE TRAP ✓
ALUMINUM SHANK LINING ✓
$3.50 Model No. 14
Dozens of other handsome models
Plain or antique
Made by L & H Stern Inc., makers of LHS Stemcrest Pipes $5, $7.50, $10

That innocent remark of Johnny's I was to remember later.

When I came back to the hotel, Jane looked at me inquiringly. I nodded. "We've got a car, and we've got another partner. Now, you can go back to L.A. and water the lawn."

She shook her head. "I'll write to the Nelsons. They'll take care of it until I get bored with watching you children play."

I knew better than to argue with her.

We worked all that night, Johnny and Mike and I. We worked very well together, and I learned to respect Mike Arno. He had managed to get through seventh grade, I learned, but that was all. He knew more about motors than any man I'd ever known, present company not excepted.

The carburetors, a pair of them, were installed by the time I went back to the hotel. At noon, I was to return, to tear down the differential for the new gearing. I was now a workingman.

Two days later we had her up on our new trailer and hitched to the Dusy. Mike was out at the curb, to wish us luck.

"I'll write you from Fulford," I promised, "and let you know how she handles. She'd better be right."

"She's right," he said. "That'll be the least of your worries."

Johnny was quiet, and I thought he seemed nervous. He had very little of his former sparkling conversation to display on the trip down. I remembered he had a lot at stake.

CHAPTER III

DIRT-TRACK JOCKEY

FULFORD'S a mile track, a dirt track, but banked, and it's been turned in a little over 34 seconds. It's within the Triple-A sanction, so that was all right. Johnny and I both carried pilot's and mech's cards in the Association.

Johnny said, "Remember when this wasn't tied up with the Association, and we lied about our ages?"

I remembered.

We drove out into the infield, and unhooked the trailer. Jane drove to town alone in the Dusy, to look for some rooms.

There were two cars in the pits, and some assorted pit monkeys around to help us unload it. We pushed it through the gate, and out into the pits. Johnny went back to the trailer to get his helmet and goggles, while I checked her over.

When he came back, he looked bad.

"You sick?" I asked him.

He shook his head. "No. Why, do I look sick?"

"You're pale," I told him.

He shrugged. "Nervous, I guess." He climbed in.

A pilot and a couple of mechs helped me push her to a start. The motor caught easily and quickly, sounding sweet.

I put a hand on Johnny's shoulder. "Easy does it, now. There's a lot about this bus we don't know, yet."

"I'll take it easy," he said. "Don't worry about that." His laugh was short and without humor. He pulled down his goggles.

He didn't try for any records, that day. He breezed her, about half throttle on the stretches and less than that on the bends. When he came in, I asked him, "How'd she handle?"

"The shocks need tightening, and—damn it, the rear doesn't seem right. She skips out on the bends."

The shock absorbers I could understand. But not the other. I said, "Let me try her," and I went to get my own goggles.

The motor was warmer now, turning over as smoothly as an electric clock. I got in, and juiced her a little, and she sounded fine. I moved into gear and out onto the track.

It had been some time, but it all came back. Maybe, because I was used to the Dusy. I gave her a couple of warmup laps, and then poured it in.

There was nothing wrong with her that I could feel. The shock absorbers were tight, and there was no skip on the turns. I slammed into the north turn, throwing a fan of grit toward the outer rail, and really nailed her down past the pits.

Around again, and I idled in.

Johnny said, "Maybe I'd better be the mech, huh? You were always a good man behind the wheel, Rick."

"And you were always better, if you'll remember," I said.

"I'm trying not to remember," he said.

It was here, at Fulford, Johnny had got the telegram saying his dad had been killed. If he was this way here, what would he be when we got to Arcola, where his dad had died?

"Try it again," I said, "and see if you don't change your mind. She seems almost right to me."

He shook his head. "Tomorrow. I'm a little tired today."

We went over to see about a garage, after that, and then Jane was back with the car. "It's a small hotel, but clean," she told us, "and there's plenty of hot water."

There wasn't much conversation on the way back to town. I remembered other cars that had been one man's meat and another's poison. But I didn't think that was the case, this time.

The next day, he tried again, after I'd checked the shocks. He pressed a little more, this time. Coming out of the north, he slewed wildly,

broadsiding up-track, and for a moment I held my breath. It wasn't speed that had done that; it was poor handling.

When he chugged into the pits, I said, "Let me try her again. She seems wild."

He got out without saying a word.

No car is perfect on her first tryout. But this one was as close to it as we could expect. I made three circuits of the oval, looking for the groove, and then, once again, I barrelled her.

It was a wallop. It was like a stiff drink after a tiring day. I thought, *If he can't, I will. This is the life.*

He must have had the same idea. When I came back, he said, "Think you could handle the piloting for Saturday's run? Rick, it—just doesn't seem right to me. It's the combination that counts."

It is the combination that counts. Motor, frame, driver and track. Only it had been Johnny's idea that I take out a pilot's permit. And that was *before* he'd tried the Dale Downdraft Special.

He had a weak grin on his suddenly young face. The assurance was all gone.

"You want to tell me about it?" I asked. "You want to let down your hair?"

He spread both hands wide. "It just hasn't come back, yet, that's all. I'm rusty."

I could think of something else it might be, but it didn't make sense. Not for a guy who had thirty Jap planes to his credit. I said, "I can handle her Saturday. I'm no Jimmy Murphy, but with the irons I've seen around here, I should do all right."

THERE was a new jalopy being pushed out onto the track now, a scarlet speedster, looking homemade. The motor caught, coughed, and then burst into song. Only song wasn't quite the word for it.

It was off key.

There was a kid behind the wheel. They still lie about their ages, I thought, and went over.

"You've changed fuel," I said, "and you haven't changed your timing."

He had a thin face, and big eyes. "Yeah," he said, "sure. How'd you know?"

"I made the same mistake when I was your age."

He said stiffly, "I'm twenty-one."

"Sure," I said, "and I fought in the Civil War. Let's run her over here next to the fence and see what she needs."

The mechs who were pushing looked at me and winked.

The kid said, "Thank you, but I don't need any help. I'd like to try her just the way she is."

"O. K.," I said, "but it's a hell of a thing to do to a motor."

"It's my motor," he said, pulling down his goggles.

I retired to the pits, to watch. One of the mechs came over to stand next to me. "His name's Speed Regan," the mech told me. "I thought they stopped using that 'Speed' back in 1919."

"I *never* saw it outside of the movies," I said.

"Well, the kid's been hotter'n a firecracker all season. He'll never go back to the farm any more."

Speed was idling through the backstretch now, and the timing didn't sound so bad. The motor was warming up. He breezed around the north turn. In the grandstand alley, he gunned it.

Flame was tipping his exhaust pipe as he arrowed past the pits.

He was hitting the south too fast. I closed my eyes for one small second and held my breath. The scarlet job seemed to drift toward the upper timber, like a slow motion picture.

And then the digging wheels found traction, and the scarlet bus shot down-track, under control.

"Speed's a good name," I said. "Speed but not sense."

Johnny was standing next to me now. Johnny said, "This is a young man's game, Rick."

"Yeah," I said, not looking at him. "Yeah, and you and I are only fifteen years younger than Floyd Roberts was when he won the 500 in 1938. And set a new record for the big one."

There wasn't any answer to that, and I didn't get any.

The lad called Speed was bringing his buggy into the pits. I swallowed my pride and went over. "You do all right," I admitted, "but why handicap yourself? This isn't a horse race. That job is timed too early. She's got too much ping."

"Thanks," he said, "but she feels all right to me. And that's what counts, isn't it?"

"That's what counts," I said.

I said no more. Who am I to help a competitor who doesn't want help? Who am I to shoulder the problems of youth? The way his job was running, he didn't have enough to win in the stretches. He had to ride the bends hard, make up his time by skill and courage. You can get away with that just so long. And then you learn, the hard way.

I climbed into the Dale Special again. I was going to *show* him what I meant, I told myself. What I really was going to do was show off, but I wouldn't admit it at the time.

I saw the Dusy coming out into the infield as I was being pushed to a start. Then I was moving along the groove, into the south, and that feeling came back, and the motor was still warm.

It was grandstanding, a vulgar display of unnecessary speed, and of seven thousand dol-

lars' worth of racing equipment. I should have been ashamed of myself, but I wasn't. I stuck close to the inner fence and let that black baby talk. She talked very well.

When I came in, I thought Speed's mouth was open. Johnny was over near the gasoline truck, and Jane was standing near our pit.

She wasn't smiling. "What's this?" she asked. "I thought you were the man with the wrench. You don't, by any chance, fancy yourself as a driver, do you?"

"I've seen worse," I said.

"Where?"

"Jane," I said, "please, kid—don't—"

She came over to stand next to the car. "I'm sorry, Rick. It's only that all I've ever heard from you was what a driver Johnny was. And now—"

"And now he's—he's sick," I said. "And he's our boy, Jane. And it's our problem, too. You see that, don't you? It's not only because of the racing, or the success of the carburetor. It's deeper, and more important than that. It's—"

She put a hand on my shoulder. "O. K. I can't think like a man. But I'll try, Rick. Only you will be careful?"

"Of course," I said. With death and disaster only a split-second away, it pays to be careful, I thought.

Johnny was back, now. "Nice going," he said, "but don't think you're going to keep it up. I'll find myself, one of these days."

"Of course you will," Jane said, "and it's nothing to fret about. Rick will do all right until you're ready."

Neither of them sounded like they meant it.

Well, Rick did all right, at that. There was a fine crowd out Saturday, and the track had been well watered and rolled. This was no converted horse track, but designed for automobile racing, and adequately banked.

The smell of burning oil was in the air, though I thought it was a little different than it used to be. I realized then that nobody was using castor oil any more, and it was that I missed.

I HAD the pole in the five-mile opener. Speed Regan flanked me in his scarlet job, and an old-timer named Buzz Lawler was on the rail directly behind me.

Buzz was wheeling an old flathead, and I thought I wouldn't have to worry about him. I thought, before the race.

We went around once, for the flying start, and the green flag dropped.

I gunned her, as we hit the line, and figured to ride into the first bend all alone. A slight miscalculation.

Buzz and Speed and I hit it together. Speed was riding high, and that should have given me the edge. For I was in the groove. But Buzz was riding in tow, right behind me. This riding in tow is quite a trick, for the lead car breaks the wind. Only it means that the car behind has to stay close, very close.

Speed was high, and should be losing ground. Buzz was riding my rear deck. Then Speed tried his down-track trick.

I saw his radiator grille pointed at me, and I remembered Buzz, behind. I couldn't brake, and wouldn't have if I could. The groove was mine.

The scarlet job was screaming, fighting for traction, as she belted closer. At the last second, she straightened—and my heart started beating again.

My right foot found the floorboard. My black sweetheart seemed to leap. I threw grit on both of them, as we blasted out of the turn.

It was yours truly all the way, after that. But for the entire five laps, those two were in my hair, pressing me on the bends, making up the time, there, they lost on the stretches.

I had the car, all right, but there was lots I had to learn about driving in competition.

In the pits, Johnny said, "That kid's all right, isn't he?"

I nodded. "And old man Lawler still knows a trick or two."

"You won," he said.

I shook my head. "The car won."

"The combination won, then," he compromised.

I could think of a better combination, I reflected, but I said nothing.

The next event was a ten-mile grind, and we weren't in it. The fifteen, following that, was for us. The track was rougher now, but nothing compared to what it would be for the last race.

I didn't have the pole. Young Regan's scarlet job occupied that choice spot, and Buzz Lawler flanked him. I was due to eat some dust from my spot, next to the rail, in the second row.

From the infield, behind our pits, Jane held one clenched hand aloft, and I waved back. Johnny said, "Don't do anything foolish. We've got a lot of races ahead of us."

"You never know," I told him, "in this game, how many races are *ahead*. All you can be sure of are the ones behind."

That wagon of Speed's threw a lot of dirt. I was thankful for the screen we'd fastened to the front. He and Buzz waged a little see-saw, ding-dong battle of their own for the first seven laps, and then I made a bid.

I made it as we broadsided out of the north, and I caught Buzz halfway down the stretch. But Speed was moving away, as I went around Buzz.

I tailed him into the south, gaining.

The scarlet job went slewing up the bank,

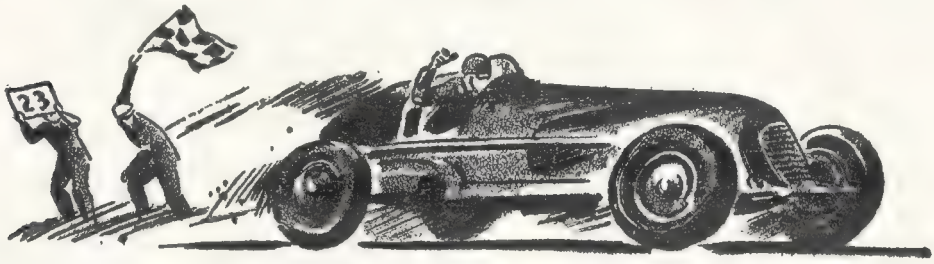
as usual, and I had the fence, the speed rut. I kept the D-O nosed in, and I fed her the soup. I was so close to the rail I could smell the paint, and I could feel the deck trying to slide.

But the traction held. I rode into the backstretch a good twenty feet in front of Regan. I kept that twenty-foot advantage all the way to the checkered flag.

I came into the pits feeling very pleased with myself and my growing skill.

The next race was a consolation, and winners were barred. It was a fifteen mile affair, and Buzz Lawler's flathead got the nod when the checkered flag went down. Speed, who'd won the second race, wasn't in this one.

The thirty-mile feature wound up the afternoon. It was all arranged in my mind now, the probable sequence. I had the car, and skill enough to cop. Regan had a better car than Lawler's, and less sense than the veteran, so he'd take second. Lawler had all the savvy he'd garnered through the years, plus an instinct for wheeling better than anyone else at the meet. He should take third.



In the thirty-mile feature, Speed Regan led all the way to the checkered flag.

The element I overlooked was that young Regan wasn't used to taking second place to anyone, and he was beginning to feel unhappy. This one he meant to have.

He got the jump on me right from the green flag. He souped that iron of his to its straining limit and went into the first turn showing me his dust.

There was plenty of dust by this time.

I chased him. I threw away what sense I had, and camped on that young madman's trail, and hoped he would get an attack of sanity before the thirty laps were run.

If he did, it was never apparent. The stands were up for the entire thirty miles and my heart was up, too—up in my throat.

The ruck-runners saw what was happening, and all those who were out of it coasted into the haven of the pits. That track was no place for anybody with sense, not that race.

He led all the way to the checkered flag. I came in second. I came in covered with dirt, with my mouth dry as ashes, and about five years deducted from my life expectancy.

Johnny was there to comfort me. "Nice running, boy. That kid can wheel."

"I've only met one in my life who could wheel better," I said.

He knew whom I meant. "We'll see, Rick," he said. "Give me a little time. It'll come back." He tried a smile. "I'm going to practice all week. Next Saturday, maybe I'll be ready."

Sunday was baseball day in this neck of the woods so there'd be no racing tomorrow.

In the morning I wrote a letter to Mike Arno, giving him what dope he might be interested in. In the afternoon, we played gin rummy, the three of us, dealer sits out.

There wasn't much conversation, and what there was skirted the topic that occupied all our minds. It was Johnny himself who made the only mention of it, just before we went out to supper.

"Maybe," he said, "it'll be different at a different track."

"Don't worry about it," Jane said. "You're giving it too much importance. You can't expect to keep your skill through all these years."

"It's not *skill* I was talking about," Johnny said.

CHAPTER IV

CRACK-UP

THE next morning, I was up around eight, which is early for me. But Johnny wasn't there. And Johnny was a later sleeper than I was.

Jane and I drove out to the track about nine. There was a car on the track, so we couldn't drive through to the infield. It was the Dale Downdraft Special.

We parked by the gate, and watched.

It was better than his last exhibition. There was no desperation broadsiding on the bends, and he moved along the stretches smartly. It

was an improvement, but it wasn't anything that would bring him into the money.

After he'd pulled into the pits, we crossed over into the infield.

He looked better. "It's coming back," he said. "I've been taking it easy, but I feel more at home, now."

He kept it up all week. Saturday, he said, "Let me try it in the opener. If I'm not ready, you can take the rest of the program."

He didn't look too good. He looked better than he actually was, because of the slow field, but I discounted that. Young Regan wasn't in it, but Buzz Lawler was, and Buzz's old flathead rode the D-O's tail doggedly for the five laps. But Johnny won.

I lied gallantly. "You'll be all right, from now on."

He might have been, at that, if young Regan had gone back to the farm, and Buzz had retired. Between them, they kept Johnny in the three spot for the fifteen-mile grind.

In the thirty-mile feature, another youngster came along to increase the competition. He was wheeling a very ordinary rocker-arm job, but he made up in courage what he lacked in experience and equipment.

It was another dog fight. Speed and the new kid fought it out during the early laps, and Speed beat back the youngster's challenge. He rode into the twentieth all alone. Somewhere along about the twenty-fifth lap, old Buzz made his bid.

It was Buzz and young Regan from there in, and that flathead of Lawler's took on wings for this one. But even wings couldn't beat Speed Regan this afternoon.

It was hub and hub to the twenty-ninth lap, hammer and tongs, and then the gap between them began to lengthen. Regan won by a clean hundred feet, with Buzz second, the new kid third, and Johnny a very poor fourth.

In the pits, Johnny said, "It's all right. You watch me at Lexington."

The racing at Lexington would start in a week, and we were leaving Fulford the next day.

Lexington is a mile track, but a flat one. Compared with Fulford, it isn't much of a plant. But the tradition behind it is stronger, and the best dirt track jocks in the country were there for the meet.

I didn't like it for Johnny. I liked it even less when I learned young Regan was there.

I was in the pits early one morning, and there was this scarlet car. With the lad called Speed tinkering with the motor. We were practically alone in the pits.

"You haunting us?" I asked him.

He shook his head. "Just trying to make a living." He walked over to look at the Special's power plant. He just looked, saying nothing.

"Well?" I asked him.

He looked up at me. "What's there to say? It's—it's beautiful." He was blushing now.

I said, "It seems to me your motor sounded a little better in those two thirty-mile grinds at Fulford."

The blush didn't go away. "I took your advice.. I retarded the timing a shade." He looked at the wrench in his hand. "And—thanks."

I said, "Where'd you learn to ride the bends? Where'd you get that down-track charge of yours?"

He smiled. "In the midgets, I guess. We used to run inside a lot, on tanbark, and it's a habit I carried over."

"It's a good habit to lose," I said. "One life to a customer, you know. You're no cat."

"I'll get by," he said. "I'm young. I can handle it."

"You're never too young to learn," I said, and bent over my motor again.

Which was rude, I know, but I didn't like his implying I had seen my best days under McKinley.

I DON'T know if it was the heat or the change in tracks that worked the miracle in Johnny. I know the smile was back on his face, and his driving, right from the first trial spin, distinctly improved.

It must have been the memories at Fulford, I thought. He'll be all right from here in.

It was hot. The dust seemed to stay suspended in the shimmering air, and the smell of burning oil never left us. I was irritable and Jane stayed in the comparative coolness of the hotel. Johnny moved through it all with a minimum of grumbling. The day of the qualifying trials, Johnny set a new record for the track, 35.80.

The track management had decided to open with a hundred-mile race, rather than an afternoon of shorter grinds. A hundred miles in that heat was going to be rough on the customers and unvarnished hell for the pilots.

Johnny had the pole. Johnny also had the car and the attitude he'd been needing. Whether Johnny had the skill for a hundred miles of the stuff he had shown in his qualifying run we were about to learn.

The field was class. It included two boys who had finished in the money at Indianapolis, and the west coast champ, Rex Neagle. It included our young competitor, Alfred (Speed) Regan.

The cars were lining up, now, motors coughing, singing. The pacemaker car drove down the track, to take the head of the procession.

Perched on the fence behind me, Jane said, "Looks like your days are going to be brighter, Ricky boy."

"It looks that way," I admitted.

She was wearing jodhpurs and a man's white shirt. Her black hair was piled high. The masculine treatment, I thought. She looked about as masculine as Hedy Lamarr. But she didn't look too unhappy, considering that Johnny was receiving one perfume-tinted letter a day.

Johnny was grinning. He waved at Jane, and Jane waved back in her sisterly way, and I pretended to be checking the water cans.

Then the pacemaker was edging forward and the cars behind moved with it. Into the first turn, like a parade, twelve cars, all the colors there were. Twelve cars, each one representing the hopes and the skill and the courage of its driver. The pole car represented that and a little more.

I would find out about Johnny, today.

Into the backstretch, the pace rising, the motor roar higher and shriller. Into the north turn, and out of it, and down the grandstand alley. Johnny and Rex Neagle, who flanked him, were jockeying for position now, for the jump at the line. But they must have maintained a clean position.

For the green flag dropped.

Both of their cars leaped, as the pacemaker swung wide. But the ebony Special had the moxie, and Johnny rode into the first turn leading Rex by twenty feet.

All of the cars were fighting for the fence, and the motor noise was straight from hell. All of the cars were eating Johnny's dust.

And that was the way it was. Through the first, tenth, and fiftieth laps. Through the entire first half of that killer, Johnny led them. The heat was terrific, and near the upper fence, the soft mound grew and grew, built by the churning rear wheels.

At fifty miles, Johnny had lapped four of them, and three others had clanged into the pits, victims of the heat and the dust.

Jane, still near our pits, said, "That boy of yours has found himself, hasn't he?"

"Yup," I said.

"I'm glad," she said.

So was I. I also envied him, despite the heat. I had had enough piloting in the past month to make a mech's life look very drab. But I was still glad for Johnny.

Sixty laps, sixty-five. From his number two position, a quarter mile back, the coast champ, Rex Neagle, began to move up.

Johnny maintained his pace. In five laps, Rex climbed up to within challenging position, and Rex made his bid, coming out of the north.

It was skillfully made, and Rex's iron was a D-O, with plenty of moxie. But the D-O wasn't up to ours, and Rex wasn't Johnny.

Johnny, indulging in a bit of whimsey, let Rex get alongside, hub to hub, nose to nose, and then Johnny uncorked the Special.

Daylight grew between them, as the Special just walked away. I felt confident about this grind, after that. We had the combination.

In the back lane, our former rival, Speed Regan, was batting along in fourth place, nearly a lap behind Johnny. That iron of Speed's was not for this kind of competition.

In the back lane, and Johnny was ready to lap him.

Young Speed proceeded to take his life in his hands. He was nearly a mile behind, and the track was murder, and Johnny had the car. But the humiliation of being lapped must have been too much. At his age, pride is a terrible thing.

Johnny started to go around, and the scarlet job took on new life. Somehow, the youngster squeezed another hundred revs out of her. They snarled into the turn, fighting it out.

The kid had the groove, and the short route. He led Johnny out, by fifteen feet, into the front lane.

He was wide open, as they hurtled past the pits. He was wide open, going into that rutted south, and Johnny was gaining on him, and I knew it was going to happen. There are limits.

Johnny caught him, just before they hit the bend, and Johnny started to go by. It was then the scarlet buggy went into its familiar gilhooley.

BRIGHT STAR BATTERIES
GIVE MORE BRIGHT LIGHT LONGER FOR YOUR 10¢
BRIGHT STAR
No 10 M
FLASHLIGHT BATTERY
GIVES MORE BRIGHT LIGHT LONGER
BRIGHT STAR BATTERY CO.
TO PROVE IT, laboratory tests were conducted under government standards. The results of these tests are illustrated by stacking 10 pennies for each of three leading brands. Here's what happens:
RESULTS:
BRIGHT STAR
7¢ Very Bright Light
2¢ Good Light
1¢ Fair Light
BATTERY A
3¢ Very Bright Light
5¢ Good Light
2¢ Fair Light
BATTERY B
4¢ Very Bright Light
4¢ Good Light
2¢ Fair Light

Johnny, on the outside, tried to wrench the Special clear, sailing straight up-track, toward the rail.

For one dusty, hazy second, it looked like he might make it.

Then the front wheels hit that soft ridge of thrown dirt, and the Special seemed to twist desperately. The left front caught Regan's deck, and they went over the bank together.

Flying timber was silhouetted against the sky, as a multi-voiced scream came from the stands. In the infield, the ambulance clanged. Frantically, the starter was giving the other drivers the yellow caution flag.

I started to run . . .

IT COULD have been worse. Regan's car was a twisted wreck, and both Regan and Johnny were unconscious. But Johnny came to as they were lifting him into the ambulance and found somewhere the ingredients for a grin.

At the hospital that night, he was chipper. "Just a sprained wrist," he told Jane and me. "These docs think I'm punchy, so they're going to hold me overnight. How's the car?"

"O. K.," I said. "A couple days' work will fix her. Frame isn't bent, nor the front axle."

Johnny said thoughtfully, "It's a good thing I was wearing that safety belt."

I remembered that a safety belt was one of the things missing from the equipment of young Regan.

Jane said, "Here's some mail for you. It was forwarded from Fulford." She handed over three of the perfumed square envelopes I had learned to recognize.

I said, "I think I'll go down the hall and see young Regan."

Jane came along.

He was sitting up in bed, his head swathed in bandages, his right arm in a sling. He looked up belligerently as we entered.

He put down the copy of the *Racing Herald* he had been reading, and said, "I suppose this'll be an I-told-you-so."

I shook my head. "Just wanted to see how you were."

"I'm finished," he said. "I'm nineteen years old and through. That's how I am."

"Through?" I asked. "I understood you were going to be all right."

"I'll live. I'll walk and talk and work without any trouble. But I won't drive, not in races. That's what the docs said. I wonder if they think that's living?"

"Millions and millions of people think it is," I said. "You could be a mech."

The scorn in his laugh told me what he thought of that. "Mech," he said, and nothing more.

I must have colored, for he said quickly, "It's O. K. for you. You're a good one. What kind of a mech would I make? There's only one thing for me, one thing I can do better than the others."

I wrote Mike Arno's name and address on a piece of paper and gave it to him. "When you're up and around again," I told him, "go and tell this gent I sent you. He might change your mind about that."

Out in the hall again, Jane said quietly, "Is that the way they all feel about being a mechanic?"

I shrugged. "You can look over all the records," I said, "and you'll find the names of all the drivers. But never the mechs who made it all possible. It's a thankless racket."

"You'd rather drive, wouldn't you?" Jane said.

"No," I lied. "It's not for me."

Not any more than eating and sleeping.

I had my chance in the days that followed. Johnny's wrist came back to what appeared to be normal, but evidently appearance meant nothing. At times, he could drive, and drive well. But in the longer grinds, it would break down. On the dirt ovals, it's the wrists that bring them home in front.

At Red Cliff, Johnny drove. He copped three firsts and an also ran and looked like a champ in the first three. In the other, he led the field for three quarters of the race, and then dropped to nowhere. It was a fifty-mile race.

At Arcola, I drove. Both the short ones and the long ones. I copped two firsts and two seconds and a third. The competition wasn't too rugged, but I told myself that I'd had bad breaks. I told myself, only half believing it. But I knew Johnny didn't want any part of that track.

At the Wisconsin State Fair, I took the long ones and Johnny the short heats. Johnny took firsts in every grind he entered. In the hundred-mile feature, I drove a heady, smart, fast race and finished behind two gents who drove headier, smarter and faster with inferior equipment.

I still wasn't convinced that I'd make a better mechanic.

The days were getting shorter and the nights colder. Johnny said, "It looks like the old stamping grounds from here in."

The old stamping grounds was the coast, the tracks around L. A., where summer spends the winter and the young men live for speed.

IN OCTOBER, we headed west. Johnny had an exercising machine now, for his wrist, and when he wasn't around that, a rubber ball he carried in his pocket. He'd knead this by the hour. He drove with a wrist strap, most of the time.

There's a macadamized track, near Los An-

geles, called Motor Stadium, and that's where we made our winter stand.

It's a mile track, well banked, and attracts enough of the top line men and equipment to make racing profitable week in and week out for the entire season. Profitable for the promoter, that is. It doesn't seem that racing is ever profitable for drivers, not if they care enough for the sport to maintain expensive equipment.

In November, Johnny tried a hundred-mile grind there. He lapped every car in the field but two and beat the best of these by a good quarter lap.

That same week, Mike Arno wrote to tell us that six of the carburetors had been sold to three Association stars and they were willing to write us a testimonial any time, gratis.

Johnny read the letter three times. When he looked up at me, he was grinning like a kid. "We're in," he said.

I had a copy of the *West Coast Racing News* in my hand, and I showed it to him.

It contained an ad for the new Calvin Racing Carburetor. In a signed testimonial, Rex Neagle, West Coast Champ, stated that it was the finest carburetor manufactured today, and a necessity for any pilot.

"*Him*," Johnny said, with contempt. "He was West Coast champ *last* season."

I made no remark.

Johnny's wrist was still erratic. He had won the hundred miler, and I thought it was cured. But it wasn't, he claimed. Some days it was good, and some days it was pure murder. These last were the days I drove.

It must have been just coincidence that these were also the days Rex Neagle was entered. He made me look very bad, even though I usually finished second. Anyone less stubborn would have admitted that Rex was the better man.

"I'm finished," he said. "I'm nineteen years old and through."

We had restored the Special's original gear ratio for this hard track, and there was no iron on the coast she couldn't beat, properly handled. I knew that some day I'd handle her properly.

Rex began to make a few remarks, from time to time, and most of them managed to get back to me. Whether they got to Johnny or not, I don't know. He never mentioned it, at any rate.

It was in December that the square, perfumed letters stopped coming.

It was none of my business, of course. So I said, "Is it all over?"

"What?"

"The merger with the Calvin money. The romantic future."

He shook his head. "She said that any time I'd come to my senses, she'd be waiting."

"And . . .?"

"And—what?"

"You promised her you'd make a six months' trial. The six months are up. You didn't stand by your promise?"

He patted my shoulder patronizingly. "Why don't you stick to things you understand, like motors?"

"And driving?" I asked him.

"And driving," he admitted.

"Now, we're both lying," I said. "I'm no pilot."

Which was just fishing, and successful. "Like hell you aren't," he said. "You're a plenty sweet boy behind the wheel, Rick Temple."

It was so easy to believe that I believed him.

That night the three of us went to a movie, and if Johnny was a disappointed lover, he was putting on a good act. He looked normal to me. But then, so did his wrist.

We were staying at the cottage, and Jane was doing the cooking. Both of us began to put on a little weight.

Johnny said, "Jane, you're going to make a fine wife for some guy."

He looked startled at her sudden blush. Jane isn't the blushing type.

We both got heavier and Johnny got confident, and Rex Neagle continued to run me into the ground every time we met in competition.

CHAPTER V

TOO HOT TO HANDLE

IN JANUARY, Johnny began to get those square, perfumed envelopes again, and Jane's cooking was only ordinary for a few days. This love, I thought, must be something to avoid.

Mike Arno wrote to say that Speed was working for him. Speed was doing all right, but would go nowhere near the speedway. I couldn't blame him for that.

Johnny said, "He's got to lick it. He'll never be normal and whole unless he does."

Which all sounded noble and self-disciplinary and stalwart. It almost made me forget Johnny's conveniently troublesome wrist.

Another hundred-mile grind was coming up the following Sunday and Rex Neagle was favored to win. As one scribe put it:

It looks like Neagle again, and for only one reason. Johnny Dale, regular driver for the Dale Downdraft Special, is usually in the pits for those events in which Rex is entered. Both boys have enough points for the season to make a legitimate claim for the championship. Why not make this the championship race?

I showed the piece to Johnny.

"Sticks and stone may break my bones," he said, "but—"

"But bad publicity for the Dale Special isn't going to help our carburetor sales any," I finished for him.

He took a deep breath and looked at me. "Rick, I *know* I can beat that guy. But you don't. That's why I want you to wheel in this one. Does that make sense?"

"Only to you," I said.

"O. K.," he said finally. "I'll take this one—if my wrist's in shape."

This Rex Neagle was a beefy lad, addicted to cigars and bragging. Rumor had it that Calvin was backing him, but rumor can be wrong. He knew his way around a track; that much was certain.

In the qualifying trials he did all right. He did a little better than Johnny. The two of them would make the first row, Rex on the pole. Johnny's wrist seemed to be in shape.

Jane was out there, but sitting in a box with some of the drivers' wives. Being a race driver's wife, I reflected, would be one hell of a life.

Johnny had beaten Rex in the dirt, but Rex was on his home ground now, on a fast, hard track that he favored. The cars were close, though ours had the edge. And our carburetors, I liked to think, were definitely superior to his.

It was a battle, right from lap one. Whether the new Calvins were better than our pots, I couldn't judge. They were better than the old Calvins Rex had used at Lexington. In a way, I was glad to see he was giving Johnny a run for his money. It proved I wasn't as bad a pilot as some of my fellow mechs were beginning to suggest.

It was hub and hub for the first ten laps, and then Johnny began to get the edge. Rex trailed him, riding in his wake, and waiting his chance, there were lots of miles ahead, and he let Johnny set the pace.

The pace Johnny set was hot, but Rex stayed with him.

I clocked them, for a lap, and they were moving as fast as Johnny had ever moved on this dish.

At eighty-five laps, Rex began to move up.

Grandstanding Johnny Dale pulled the same trick he had pulled at Lexington. He let Rex come alongside, ride hub to hub with him past the stands. Then he juiced the Special.

The Special didn't walk away, this time. But it did gain, inch by inch, as they burrowed into the south turn. He increased the lead in the backstretch and led Rex by five feet into the north.

He pulled out of it, leading by ten feet. But as he blasted past the pits, he had one hand high in the *change tire* signal.

With fourteen laps to go, this was a hell of a time for a tire change. I've seen it done in 16 seconds at Indianapolis, but not with the crew I had. My crew consisted of one (1) mechanic from the next pit with whom I exchanged services in a case of this kind.

We had the tire ready, when Johnny came slewing in, and we did pretty well at that. In thirty seconds, he was moving out. It was the right rear tire, and badly frayed.

In those thirty seconds, Rex had completed almost a lap.

One lap to make up in twelve. It looked impossible—and it was. Johnny gained a good half mile of it back in the next seven minutes, but that wasn't enough.

Rex had copped the century run and probably the coast title.

JOHNNY looked sick when he pulled into the pits.

"My fault," I said, "I didn't check the rubber closely enough."

"I did," he said, "and it looked all right to me. This track is rough on tires." His eyes were two pits up, where Rex was climbing from his car. He said thoughtfully, "That new Calvin carburetor must be all right."

"It's stepped that job up," I admitted.

Johnny was studying me, now. "There's something I haven't told you, something I wasn't going to tell you."

I waited.

"Marion said, in one of her letters, that her dad was prepared to offer us thirty thousand dollars for the rights to the Dale Downdraft."

"Is that why she started to write to you again?" I asked.

His smile was bleak. "Could be. Anyway, what do you think?"

"It's your carburetor, your baby."

He shook his head. "No, it's *ours*. Yours and Mike's and mine."

"In that case," I said, "tell him no."

Johnny nodded. "I already have." He was climbing from the car. "I just wondered if I'd done the right thing."

"If he offered that kind of money," I pointed out, "even though he's got this new racing pot out himself, we must have something worthwhile."

What we didn't have, however, was any noticeable increase in our bankroll, despite all the wins we'd accumulated. And very little publicity for the Dale Downdraft outside of the racing sheets.

I voiced some of these doubts to Johnny.

"The big one," he said, "is what counts. With the newsreel boys there—and it'll go down in all the records and in most of the newspapers. The Dale Downdraft Special, winner of the annual Indianapolis—"

"Piloted by Johnny Dale," I added for him. "And your mask will go on the Borg Warner Trophy, and you can endorse shaving cream and tires and—"

"Maybe," Johnny said, "maybe. If my wrist is all right. That's a long grind, Rick, five hundred miles."

I said, "There's one thing you'd better know. If you don't drive this Special, she won't win."

"You're modest," he said. "You're entirely too modest."

We went down to Florida, soon after that, for a try at the Seminole track.

Like Motor Stadium, this is a hard track, but unlike Motor Stadium, it's only a half mile long. Our Special was geared too high for this one, and we saw the money only once. A half mile track is practically all curve. It wasn't important enough for us to change the gearing now.

Johnny wasn't getting any more letters. I couldn't notice that it made any difference to him, but he might have been covering up.

We went back to Indianapolis in plenty of time for a complete overhaul of the Special.

Mike was there to meet us, and young Regan. The youth was walking with a slight limp, and his eyes were shadowed. But he smiled.

I asked, "Getting to like that wrench work?"

"It's a job," he said. "But it's not driving. Nothing can take the place of that."

I knew what he meant and didn't argue.

Mike said, "He's a good boy, this Speed, and he'll make a fine mech."

I asked him about the carburetor sales, and he shrugged. "I've sold a dozen, and there was a man here who wanted to know if the patents were for sale."

"Did he look like he had money?" Johnny asked.

Mike smiled. "You know him. He works for Calvin. Mr. Boldt."

Johnny looked interested. "I'll say I know him. He's their racing engineer, worked with Calvin on that new one of theirs. Have you seen that, Mike?"

Mike nodded. "All right, huh? Nothing like ours, though."

"We'll see," I cautioned them, "on Decoration Day. Lots of boys are buying them."

The next day we went to work, tearing the Special down. Johnny had come in late the night before, so I didn't wake him when I left for the garage. Mike and I went right to work without him.

He came in, close to noon, looking worried. When Mike went out to lunch, Johnny told me, "I saw Marion last night."

"Well? That shouldn't be hard to take."

"She wants to make it up again. No matter what the relations are between her father and me."

"And how do you feel about it?"

"It's not for me, Rick. Not her kind of life, or her kind of thinking. But—well, she's got a lot of appeal. And I feel like a heel, like I'd deserted her, sort of—"

I didn't point out that the break-up had originally been her idea, or that marrying into a competitor's family might be uncomfortable. I just said, "You'll have to figure that one for yourself, Johnny."

SPEED and Johnny and I were working on the Special, when Marion came in that afternoon. Johnny moved out of earshot with her, so I've no idea what the conversation was about.

Speed said, "Why should a pilot as hot as that want to fool around with women?"

"It's a long story, Speed," I said, "and goes back through the ages."

He shook his head wonderingly. "A car like this should be enough for any man."

That, I reflected, would be tough on posterity. But I didn't consider it a profound enough observation to give voice to.

The days grew warmer, in their Indiana way. We took an ad in the official program, a full page with a cut of the car, Johnny behind the wheel, Mike and me standing by with a wrench and a smile. In the ad we emphasized that this was the car equipped with Dale Downdraft racing carburetors. There were others in the race, we mentioned, but *this* was the car sponsered by the Dale Corporation (which was on paper now), and that we also manufactured carburetors for private use, guaranteed to improve the performance of *your* car.

Mike said, "Well, we're out on the limb, a little."

"And there'll be thirty-two other guys in that race, all with saws," I added.

Johnny said nothing. Johnny yawned.

He hadn't mentioned his wrist lately, for which I was thankful.

We put the motor together again and ran a dynamometer check on her—and tore her down again.

You see, an engine's horsepower is not only that portion of it which is usable, the portion that propels the car. There is also what is known as frictional horsepower, the amount of horsepower consumed within the engine to keep the engine turning. A too large proportion of the Special's horsepower was frictional.

We were a shade more generous in our tolerances, this second time, and the results were better. But though Johnny and I were satisfied, Mike wasn't. We tore her down again.

This time, Mike was satisfied.

We checked the wheels for alignment and checked them at high speed on the wheel balancer for balance, including the six spare wheels and tires.

We went over the brakes and the steering slowly and carefully. Anything even slightly worn was replaced. We painted the big number 20 on the hood and deck. We checked her over carefully from stem to stern, time and time again.

We were checked ourselves, Johnny and I, by the Speedway's own docs and pronounced fit and ready. No mention was made by Johnny or the doc about a bad wrist.

Johnny took her out for the shakedown spin. He took her around that two and a half mile oval at a speed of fifty miles miles an hour or so, until he was sure she was ready. Then he began to move.

He was clocked, for one lap, at 1:09.2 which figures to a flat one hundred and thirty miles an hour.

When he came in, he had that shine to his eyes, and I could guess what he was feeling. That had been only a fractional part of a mile away from a one lap track record.

I said, "She's ready. You're both ready."

"She's ready," he said.

"You're *both* ready," I said. "The rest of it is in the laps of the gods, as they say."

Johnny said, "Take her out and try her. I want you to be ready, just in case."

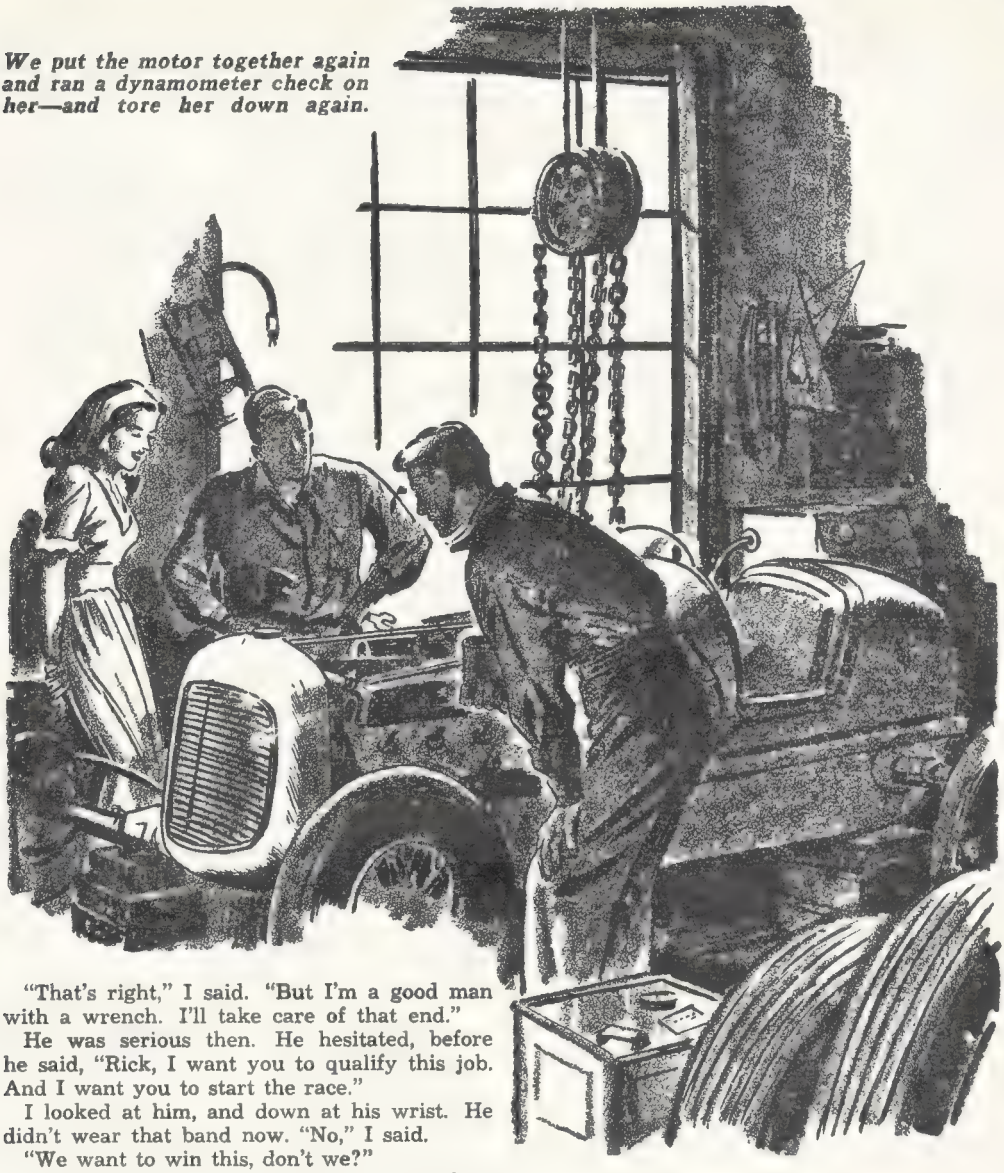
I didn't understand it, but I climbed in.

It was like a dream. Those long stretches, the banked, generous bends, the firm traction underneath. It was almost too good. After the cramped tracks, after the dirt tracks, it would be very easy to make a mistake here. It was deceptive. I was up over a hundred miles an hour before I even found the groove.

When I'd settled into it, I souped the Special. She was better than she'd ever been. And, I thought, so was I. It wasn't until the rear deck started to move toward the outer rail that I realized how fast I was going.

I brought her back under control, and idled the rest of the way around. When I came into the pits, I was nervous.

Johnny was laughing. "You got something too hot to handle?" he asked me.



We put the motor together again and ran a dynamometer check on her—and tore her down again.

"That's right," I said. "But I'm a good man with a wrench. I'll take care of that end."

He was serious then. He hesitated, before he said, "Rick, I want you to qualify this job. And I want you to start the race."

I looked at him, and down at his wrist. He didn't wear that band now. "No," I said.

"We want to win this, don't we?"

I nodded. "You should, more than any of us. It's your carburetor."

"That's right. It's one race that we can't afford to lose. And I want you to start. You've got to trust me in this, Rick."

"O. K.," I said, and tried not to think all the thoughts that crowded my head. Nothing added up. At least, nothing added up right.

WE KEPT the car in the infield garage, after that. And Johnny and I took turns in learning about the Speedway.

In the pits, we'd have Mike and Speed and Johnny for the start.

Only Speed didn't want any part of it, and refused to go for his physical. We argued for hours about it, to no avail.

Jane came into it, then, and what kind of a talk she gave him, I don't know. But he went up for his physical.

Jane had a twenty-five dollar seat, right behind the pits, with the Dusy. I had a hunch she wouldn't stay there long.

I didn't see Speed again before I went out for my qualifying run.

It was in the afternoon, and I'd been thinking about it all morning, and all the night before. In a five hundred mile grind, the starting

spot isn't too important. But qualifying is. It's a twenty-five mile sprint and I'd need to establish the grinding average of 115 miles an hour, at least.

I was nervous until I felt the Special throbbing under my foot. I knew it was in the bag, then. It may have been false confidence, but it didn't seem to be.

Because I qualified her at an average of 124.027 miles per hour.

I was still in a daze, when Johnny congratulated me, in the pits. And I was still in a daze when I met Speed at the pedestrian tunnel entrance, just a little distance from the judges' stand.

I guess Speed must have been, too. He looked like he'd just seen Santa Claus. "I can drive," he said. "I can wheel again."

It didn't register with me. "We've got two drivers, now," I told him.

"Next year," he said, "when I'm twenty-one. I'll be back here, then."

It came home finally. I said, "You're— You mean—"

"When I went up for my physical," the youth explained, "the doc wanted to know if I was a pilot or mech, and I told him I couldn't possibly pass the pilot's exam, and he told me I was crazy."

"If you can pass it here, you're ready for anything," I said.

"Yeah," he said. And kept repeating, "Next year."

Our old friend Rex Neagle qualified that afternoon, too. In a new bus labeled on the program as the Calvin Special. His time was a little better than mine. Or anyone else's, as it later turned out. He managed to cop the pole position.

That night, Mike said, "I think we're suckers to look for financing. We won't get it without sacrificing an interesting in the business. And we don't want that, do we?"

Johnny said he didn't.

I agreed.

"There's money in this race," Mike went on. "There's twenty thousand, flat, to the winner, and a hundred dollars a lap for each lap in which a driver leads. There are accessory prizes, and money to be made in endorsements, and prestige. We could get a small plant with that, and tool it ourselves. We could sell to the racing gang first, and go on from there, building it up slowly."

That made sense. If we won. If we won against the field of thirty-two other boys, the cream of the field driving the finest equipment money could buy.

Mike said, as though in answer, "And we can win this one. Johnny can win this one, or you can, Rick."

"We can try," I said.

Johnny said nothing.

CHAPTER VI

HELL ON WHEELS

THE gates opened at six o'clock, Decoration Day. There had been people waiting all night, and one gent who'd been waiting three weeks. Over a hundred and sixty thousand people were there. The prices ranged from a dollar in grandstand G to twenty-five dollars for reserved parking space behind the pits. They paid it cheerfully. Critics have claimed they come to see crack-ups, and I'm no judge of that. With twenty to thirty thousand people killed on the highways every year, I doubt if anyone would have to travel all the way to Indianapolis to see a crack-up.

This much I know, it's a thrill to watch and a thrill to wheel, and I'm proud to have a part in it.

And it came to me, then, the reason Johnny had feigned the bad wrist.

At nine o'clock, the band, advertised as the largest band in the world, paraded. They may or may not have been the largest in the world, but they looked like it, to me. They played the Speedway March and some others. They played the national anthem.

At nine forty, we were lining up for the start. Mike and Speed brought out the battery hook-up on a little hand truck we had. The rules specify that all cars must be equipped with starting motors, but not necessarily batteries. We had magneto ignition, so we didn't need the battery.

Mike said, "Bring her into the pits at a hundred laps, halfway through. We'll change that right rear rubber then and any others that need it. We'll load her with gas. One stop should be enough, if everything goes right."

Johnny came out, and he was grinning like he'd put something over on me.

"I know what you're up to," I said. "I hope they decide only one name goes up there."

Johnny said, "It was Boyer and Corum in '24 and Rose and Davis in '41."

"They may not approve this," I said. "And you're taking a chance. I could lose this one for you, bright boy."

It was the Johnny of 1939 who said, "Just stay in the first ten, Speedy. You're in fast company, but you can do it."

In the infield, the ten minute bomb went off.

The pacemaker, a cream-colored convertible, was idling along the track, toward the head of the procession.

The day was warm, but humid enough for ideal carburetion. I *was* in fast company. There were thirty-three cars in this race, and every one of them had had the painstaking preparation of the best mechs in the business.

I was on the inside, in the third row. The

cars were two abreast, which meant I was holding down the fifth position. If I could maintain that, I'd be satisfied. I wasn't overrating my ability, not to the extent of thinking *I* could cop, in this field.

The one minute bomb went off.

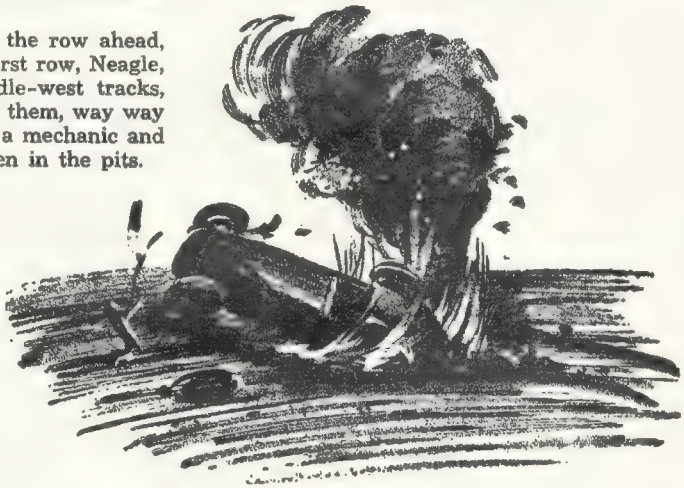
All the motors were turning, now, the mechs going back to the concrete protected pits. I felt a tenseness that would leave, I hoped, after the first lap.

Johnny and Speed and Mike left me, and I was alone out there, so far as allies went.

Then dimly, the start bomb, and we were moving around for the pacemaking lap. I felt suddenly cold, for no reason at all.

After Johnny had licked his phobia, he'd needed some excuse to make a driver out of me. His wrist had served for that. It was all right, I knew now, and had been all right for months. It was *this* he'd wanted me to share. Even at the risk of losing the race. It was this dream we had shared, as kids.

Flanking me, Shaw. And in the row ahead, Snyder and McQuinn. In the first row, Neagle, and a new kid from the middle-west tracks, Jimmy Delco. Good boys, all of them, way way beyond Rick Temple, who was a mechanic and engineer—who should have been in the pits.



Two laps later, I saw Jimmy's car again—a twisted, burning wreck.

I'd gone crazy, for twenty-five miles, and qualified high. But twenty-five miles is not two hundred and fifty. At the halfway mark, Johnny would take over.

Into the backstretch, now, the pace lifting, the motor whine growing higher. Shaw's streamliner edged ahead of me a little, and then fell back.

Into the turn, like a parade, and into the main stretch, the grandstand alley. The pace was up there, now, and flame tipped a few exhaust pipes in the rows ahead.

Riding down on the green flag, thunder lifting from the ranks behind, all the pilots jockeying, now, for position.

The green flag dipped.

I gunned the D-O the same second Shaw did, and we paced it out into the turn. I had the inside and, the shortest route and no particular sense at the moment. I gave the Special all she'd take, and she took it like the thoroughbred she was.

I rode into the backstretch, still in the five spot, but a surprising distance behind the four irons ahead. Nobody, I reasoned, could get that lead in such a short time.

I was still trying to figure it out when Shaw went by me like a steamlined tornado. I was riding sixth.

INTO the north turn, I still rode sixth. And had decided that my present pace wouldn't keep me there very long. My right foot went probing, and the Special's whine increased.

Nobody passed me, after that. But the cars ahead could have been in another race, so far as I was concerned. I didn't seem to be gaining an inch on them.

It could have been monotonous. Lap after lap went by, at about the same rate of speed, and no car came up to make a bid. I made no bid of my own. It could have been monotonous if we haven't been averaging a hundred and eighteen miles an hour.

Then, from the leaders ahead, one car came drifting back. It was Delco, the middle-west kid, cutting the pace. He kept getting bigger, as the laps went by.

On the eighteenth lap, as we rounded the south, I was riding his deck. I moved out, to pass.

But Jimmy met the challenge with his right foot, and we rocketed into the backstretch hub and hub. For three laps we fought it out. Then, again on the south, he got the edge and began to pull away.

I made no further effort to pass him. He was traveling as close to the track limit as I cared to travel at this stage of the race, and I dropped behind to ride in tow.

Lap after lap, I trailed him by five feet, ad-

miring myself for playing it smart, letting him break the wind. What would have happened if he'd had a crack-up with me riding his deck, I don't know. I didn't think of it—until later.

At forty laps, he began to pull away. I hesitated, calculated all the angles, and maintained my present pace. Jimmy, I knew, was going up to tangle with the leaders again. That was not for me, not now.

Two laps later, I saw his car again. Crumpled up against the retaining wall on the south turn, a twisted, burning wreck.

The yellow caution flag was waving, and we drove cautiously for nine laps, maintaining position, until the track was cleared.

I tried not to think of it. When the green flag dropped again, designating a clear track, I upped the pace a little. I lapped two laggards, and was lapped or passed by one. I maintained the fastest speed I could handle, and told myself that any increase was dangerous not only to me, but to the others. It was my engineering mind, and it was no mind to bring here, today.

But I believed then, and I know now, that I was driving to the limit of my ability. And my ability wasn't up to the leaders'. As an engineer, and as a guy who loved this game, I couldn't do any more, and didn't.

At one hundred laps, I was still fifth, as I pulled into the pits.

Johnny was there, and ready. Johnny was grinning, and he gripped my shoulder, as I climbed out.

In fifty-four seconds they had gassed her up, changed two tires, and Johnny was wheeling out to complete the race. Or rather, to make a race of it.

At that time, Neagle still rode first, but McQuinn was pressing him desperately. Neagle was proving to be the sensation of the race.

Mike said to me, "You did all right, mister. You gave us all you had."

"It wasn't enough," I said.

"It was all you had," Mike repeated. "That's always enough."

A little over a minute later, when Johnny came blasting by, he added, "He'll do it."

I knew he would, too. It's no reflection on the others to say that Johnny couldn't be beat, that day. It was his day. It would be dramatic to relate that Johnny fought all the way up the last lap, and then won by a nose.

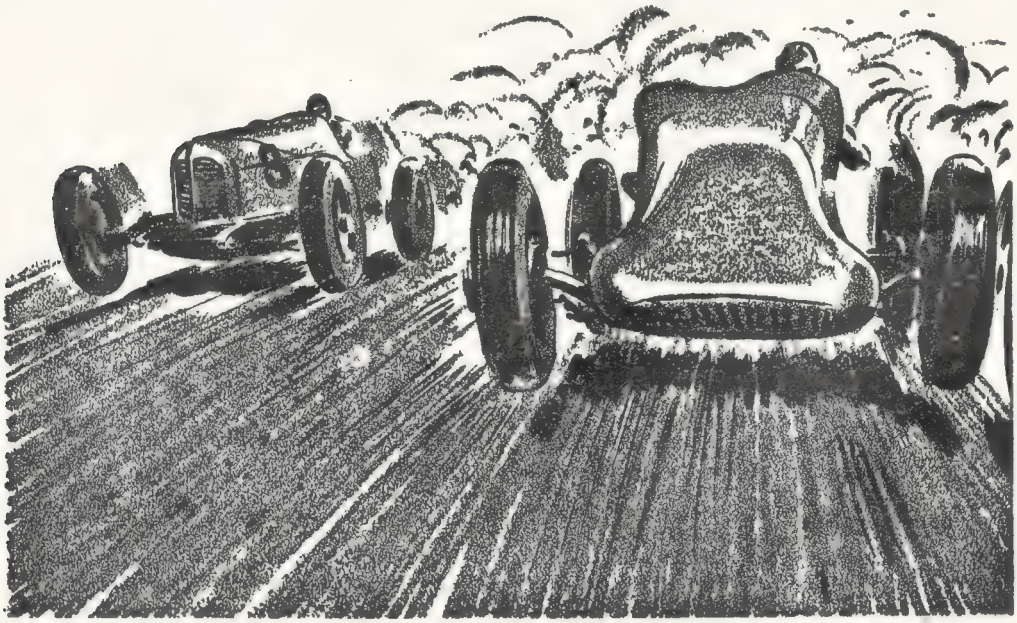
Johnny didn't. He caught them all, including Neagle, in the next ten laps. Neagle went down fighting. I'll give him credit for that. He made a contest of it for four laps, before Johnny rode alone into the north turn.

From then on, it was his. He was traveling a good four miles an hour faster than I had traveled, but he was safer at that speed than I had been at mine. There were no serious challenges after that.

I watched him, as the laps reeled by, as he took lap prize after lap prize, and I knew there was no one in the world who could have beat him that afternoon.

I was watching him when Jane's voice said, "Will he win, Rick?"

I didn't look at her. I said, "He'll win. That's my boy out there, kid, and he's the best there is, just like I always told you."



"That's *our* boy," Jane said, and I looked at her.

She held up her left hand. There was a diamond sparkling on her third finger.

"When," I said, "did that happen?"

"The other night," she said. "I knew it was just a question of time, once he got to know me. But he didn't realize it until the other night."

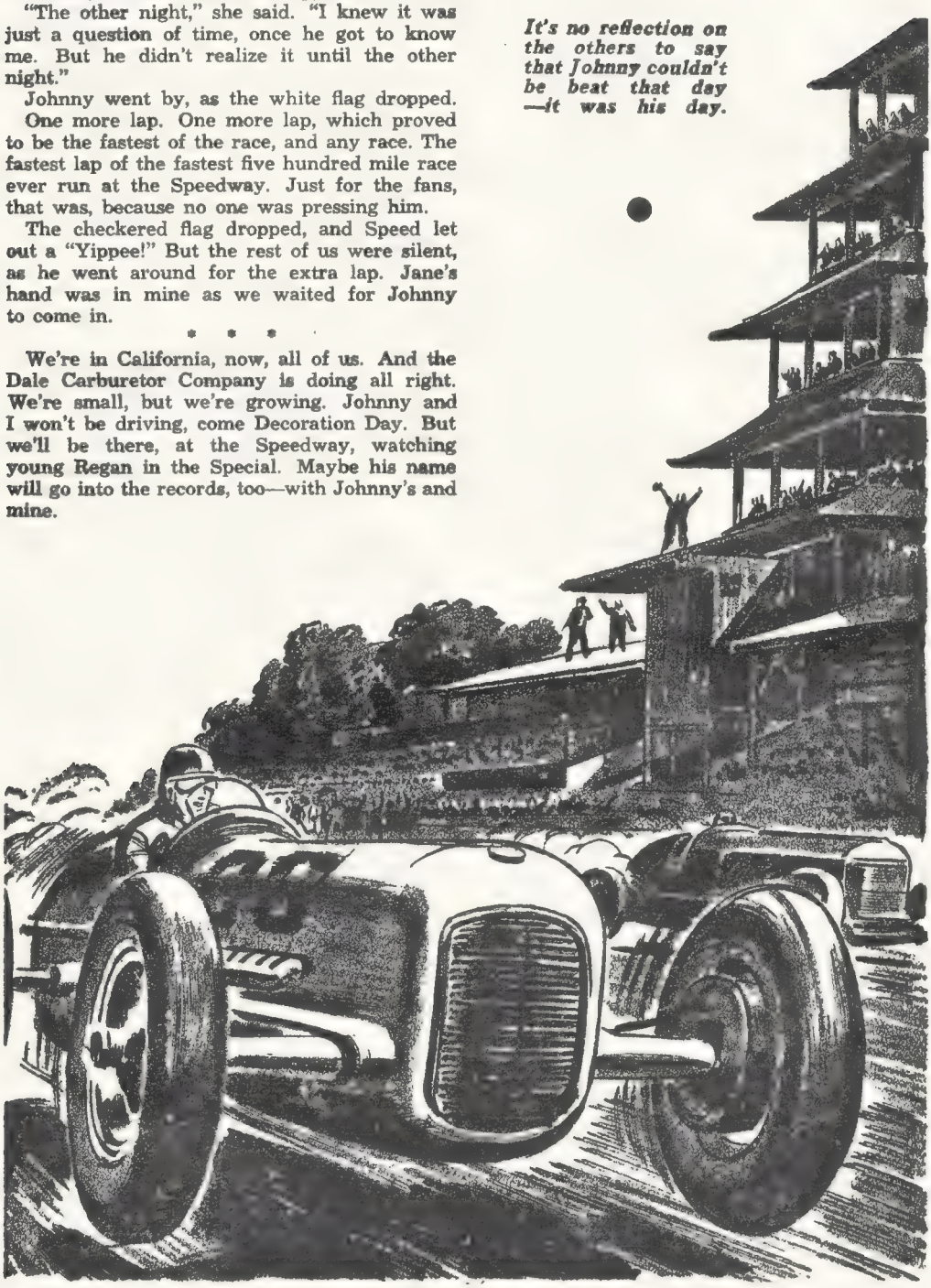
Johnny went by, as the white flag dropped. One more lap. One more lap, which proved to be the fastest of the race, and any race. The fastest lap of the fastest five hundred mile race ever run at the Speedway. Just for the fans, that was, because no one was pressing him.

The checkered flag dropped, and Speed let out a "Yippee!" But the rest of us were silent, as he went around for the extra lap. Jane's hand was in mine as we waited for Johnny to come in.

* * *

We're in California, now, all of us. And the Dale Carburetor Company is doing all right. We're small, but we're growing. Johnny and I won't be driving, come Decoration Day. But we'll be there, at the Speedway, watching young Regan in the Special. Maybe his name will go into the records, too—with Johnny's and mine.

It's no reflection on the others to say that Johnny couldn't be beat that day —it was his day.



A GENTLEMAN BY BLOOD

ILLUSTRATED BY GORDON GRANT

CAPTAIN MATCHETT was in an unfortunate position. His crew hated him because he had once been an ordinary seaman like themselves; his officers despised him since because of his once lowly station he was not, therefore, a gentleman. At times, he wondered if he actually had been lucky to be given a single epaulette by the great Rodney for outstanding bravery during the Battle of the Saints, for the unique reward had raised him far above the station in life he had inherited from humble ancestors.

Some people did not let him forget his origins. They did not do this by word, of course, for he was, after all, in command of His Majesty's seventy-four gun ship *Hector*, and, as such, had complete authority over the six hundred and fifty souls aboard. However, First Lieutenant Medlicott found ways of expressing his aristocratic disdain without putting it into words. When the captain, after a long, fruitless cruise, proposed the revolutionary idea of giving leave to each watch in turn, Medlicott raised an astonished eyebrow. When more than a score of men failed to return, Medlicott was eloquently silent.

"Not bad," Matchett said, upon hearing of the desertions. "I expected more."

Medlicott could have agreed in a conversational manner, but when he replied that he,

By
R. W. DALY

Captain Matchett's body swung into the old, familiar rhythms of loading and firing.

too, had expected more, his inflection implied he was amazed that any had come back. Medlicott could not understand Matchett. The captain had never forgotten his life below deck, and attempted to right the wrongs he had complained of before the accident of his promotion.

Aboard the *Hector,* there was no flogging. Officers could not casually beat their men with a knotted rope. The purser issued full amounts of food and surveyed that which was spoiled. The mid-watch slept in. Sick men remained in the cockpit until the surgeon restored them to duty. The *Hector* was virtually a seaman's paradise.

Discipline was not destroyed by such liberality. If Captain Matchett knew from his own experience what would please the men, he likewise knew what would make them unhappy. No amount of flogging was as effective as his simple scale of extra work awarded to offenders for various crimes, since the extra work was performed during a man's hours of sleep, which almost surpassed food as the most treasured commodity aboard ship. After being up all night, with a full day's watches separating him from his hammock, a seaman often as not longed for a ship which had a flogging captain.

Thus, even though he might have wished otherwise, Medlicott was obliged to admit that the *Hector* was a smart, taut ship, and that she performed her duties in a highly efficient manner. The fortunes of war had yet to place her alongside an enemy, but on the basis of her cruises, an enemy would find her a formidable opponent.

"Oh, the chap can run a ship, all right," Medlicott confessed to his friend, Second Lieutenant Thurston. "No doubt about that. He's a seaman."

"Amen," Thurston said with a smile. They were in the first luff's quarters, and the conversation would die there. "He is a seaman."

"Exactly," Medlicott nodded. "But I'd be interested to see what he can do when operating as part of a fleet. You know, maneuvers, signals, formations."

Thurston shuddered delicately in anticipation. "He will be out of his element then."

"Exactly," murmured the first luff. "His experience prior to the *Hector* was in frigates. God knows he couldn't have learned much from convoying a few transports to India since the war." He shook his head in mock sorrow. "I believe we will enter the Channel Fleet after refitting. Alas for Captain Matchett!"

At the time, the subject of this discussion was strolling about the poop of his weather-battered ship, attempting to calculate the number of months she would be laid up in a dockyard. The *Hector* had suffered greatly on the long voyage to Madras, and her rigging hung together only by the perseverance of her commander. Captain Matchett was anxious to make Portsmouth before any of the stays parted, since the masts had been strained by boisterous winds off Madagascar and might carry away in another storm.

His meditations were disturbed by a hail from the masthead. Several sails were sighted to the east. Hoping that the *Hector* would not be forced into action, Captain Matchett nevertheless did his duty, taking a course which would bring the ship-of-the-line within hail of the strangers. He then went up the mizzen shrouds until he could see them through his glass. Counting at least seven sails, he closed his telescope. They were near Cape Finisterre, and the land bulked gloomily behind them.

When he got down to his quarterdeck, Medlicott was waiting for him.

"Get out the charts," Matchett ordered.

Smiling indulgently, Medlicott snapped his fingers at a quartermaster who was standing by with the items requested. Medlicott's smile hid wounded feelings, for he did not care to be ordered to do something he had already taken care of.

Captain Matchett could have salvaged the situation by a few words of appreciation, but he was far more interested in seeing the charts of the Spanish coast. Bending over the most informative map, he studied the depth of water. With quick glances at the shore he roughly fixed the *Hector's* position, then straightened.

"Clear for action," he said.

Instantly, Medlicott raised a hand. The boatswain's mate of the watch piped shrilly. In a few seconds the drummers began the thunder which beat the ship to quarters. The most critical admiral in the Royal Navy could not have found fault with the manner in which the *Hector* was made ready to honor the Jack standing out over her taffrail. Before the masts of the nearest ship broke the horizon, the *Hector* was cleared.

"Well done, Mr. Medlicott," the captain said graciously.

Gravely, the first luff accepted the praise, and requested permission to go to his station.

"Remain with me," the captain said. "We may not need the guns."

"But, sir, that must be a coastal convoy!" Medlicott exclaimed.

"No doubt," Matchett replied. "If fortunate, we may have a few shillings of prize money with which to remember this cruise." As landmarks became more prominent, he bent over the chart again, and carefully plotted the *Hector's* fix.

THE ship was alive with excitement. Nothing was more satisfactory after a long, thankless mission than to receive a reward tangible enough to be accepted by a tavern-keeper. The crew eagerly waited for the ships

to be visible through the gunports, and made wagers on the value of each share in the prospective prize money. Their hopes were justifiable, for the *Hector* could easily cow even fifty-gun ships into submission after a token resistance, and merchantmen would surrender immediately upon being threatened at great range.

One by one the masts of the fleeing merchantmen came into view from the *Hector's* quarterdeck. Thoughtfully, Matchett kept one eye on the ships and one on the chart. Medlicott studied his every move, but Matchett was oblivious to everything but the problem at hand. Frowning, the captain observed the appearance of another landmark.

"This won't do," he murmured.

Medlicott stared at him. "They are scarcely four miles distant, sir."

"And that is a mile too much," Matchett replied. "Secure the ship, Mr. Medlicott. Resume original course."

"Aye, aye, sir," the first luff answered, with a scornful edge to his voice.

Captain Matchett was not insensitive to the tone of his subordinate's reply, but saw no reason to explain his decision. To a careful seaman the course was obvious. The merchantmen were approaching shoal water, and only a reckless commander would have pursued them in a heavy-draft ship-of-the-line. Captain Matchett wisely forebore to take the chance of winning a few pounds at the risk of more than two score thousand. If he captured the merchantmen, England would prosper little; if he grounded or lost the *Hector,* England would sustain a loss she could ill afford in 1797.

Medlicott did not approve of his captain's judgment. That evening, when he and Thurston were sharing a bottle prior to retiring, the first lieutenant made a flat statement. "The fellow lacks resolution," he said.

The *Hector's* Second was of the same opinion. "We should have continued after them," he commented. "The crew was greatly disappointed."

"I suppose, though," Medlicott mused, "I'd be cautious, too, were I in his boots. The eyes of the fleet are on him."

Thurston snorted. "That's damned generous of you, Alex," he declared, admiring his friend's tolerance, "but you were right when you said the fellow lacks resolution. He may have been brave enough as a gunner, when the enemy was in sight, but he hasn't the moral courage to be a captain."

Sadly, Medlicott reached for the bottle. "Yes," he sighed, "that must be it. He has been entrusted with too much responsibility. He probably would have been excellent in a sloop; the *Hector* is just too much ship for him."

Entirely unaware of these charitable remarks, Captain Matchett rested on his bed, and thought about his family awaiting him in Portsmouth. Had he known of his lieutenants' conversation, he probably would have been amused. Captain Matchett had a great deal of self-assurance based upon an almost precise appreciation of his own capacities. His unique position had indeed made him careful, yet it had also sharpened his wits as he strove to acquire more and more skill with which to justify Rodney and please his superiors.

He understood the attitude of his subordinates with far more humanity than they exhibited toward him. Fully cognizant of the lieutenants' sensitivity about serving under a commander socially their inferior, he did away with the customs to which his rank entitled him. He withdrew into the solitude expected of a captain, and did not seek diversion from his officers. None was invited to his table, none had tasted his food, none had gamed with him. Matchett confined his conversation exclusively to the business of running the *Hector,* neither more nor less. Save for the chance of his rank, no officer could claim to have been slighted in any manner by the captain.

As for his crew, Matchett was aware of their feelings. To begin with, except for a few patriotic fools, every man passionately longed for the day when the war would end and he would be released from the Navy. The overwhelming majority had come into the service at the invitation of a magistrate or a pressgang. Their life was brutally hard, and he knew full well that almost as soon as he granted them an unheard-of luxury, the crew accepted it without thanks, as a right. They could not be satisfied, and he did not try to satisfy them, contenting himself with being just. He extended to them the same treatment he had once desired, without thought of recompense in devotion or popularity.

He was resigned to the fact that he was not made of the stuff for which men are idolized. Big, powerful, heavy of frame and black of face, he was obviously a sailor in a captain's uniform. His huge hands were calloused by years of labor, his muscles hard, and his skin cracked by weather. Men could worship an exquisite lordling who, by a combination of professional skill and daring, caught their fancy and exemplified their hopes. Men could only serve one who had come from among them.

Had he cared to enlighten his well-born junior, Captain Matchett could have told Medlicott what was being said between decks about the abandoned pursuit of the merchantmen. He had almost done so in Portsmouth, when Medlicott superciliously reported that some dozen men had failed to return from the leave granted by their captain. Inasmuch as Matchett had anticipated at least twice that number to be missing, he cheerfully accepted

the news. Despite his junior's disapproval, he intended to continue the practice, which, by his example, might in time become routine in the Navy, thereby placing generations of seamen yet unborn in his debt.

Though the captain was unconcerned about his vanished seamen, he did become worried when the Admiralty suddenly halved his time in the dockyard, and ordered him to be ready to sail upon a day's notice. Refreshed by their vacation, his crew cheerlessly got stores aboard with sullen efficiency, and the *Hector* was prepared to get under way the instant after receiving dispatches.

Matchett was afraid he was going to be assigned the West India convoy making up at Portsmouth. He seemed doomed to the inglorious tasks usually given frigates, and he surveyed the convoy with a prejudiced eye. Had he been privileged to sit with the Lords at Whitehall, he would have been cheered. After an absence from England of eighteen months, Matchett was unfamiliar with the political situation, but England could ill afford to waste ships-of-the-line on trifling errands. Spain had thrown in her lot with France, and the Royal Navy thus became outnumbered on all fronts. Shamefully, the British abandoned the Mediterranean, as General Buonaparte ran riot in Italy.

WHEN orders came to the hastily-refitted *Hector,* she was freed from the drudgery of shepherding, and sent to Rear-Admiral Parker at Spithead. Captain Matchett had weighed anchor before the lieutenant, who brought the dispatch, reached shore. He was elated. The *Hector* would be serving with a fleet, which was her heritage and his aspiration.

The *Hector* made the passage to Spithead in record time, and Matchett was aboard the ninety-eight gun *Prince George* scant seconds after her officer of the deck had reported the *Hector's* arrival. Admiral Parker was impressed by Matchett's enthusiasm. The *Prince George* was taking a squadron of five ships to join Sir John Jervis, who had ten ships watching forty at Gibraltar. Admiral Parker felt that his captains' enthusiasm would soon be most valuable, for odds of four-to-one discouraged most fighting men who had a realistic attitude toward war.

Nor did Admiral Parker fail to diminish these odds by the excellence of his squadron. After quitting Lord Bridport's tentative search for a fight off Brest, Parker relentlessly drilled his ships through the Bay of Biscay.

These maneuvers amused Lieutenant Medlicott, for Captain Matchett refused to handle the *Hector* from the moment the shores of England faded behind her taffrail. Medlicott was obliged to stand by with the watch officers until he became sure that each was familiar with the signals and initial movements. During these tedious hours of instruction, Matchett silently stalked the quarterdeck, cocking an ear occasionally to listen to Medlicott. His calmness gradually irritated the *Hector's* first luff.

"Damn it!" he complained to Thurston. "He prances around as though he were a headmaster supervising a tutor!"

"Perhaps he's a pupil, and not a headmaster," Thurston suggested casually.

Medlicott's aristocratic face lost its anger. "Why, certainly," he muttered slowly, pleased. "That's it!"

Thereafter, the first luff relished the opportunity to display his excellent naval knowledge before his senior. The watch officers were treated to a strict course of station-keeping, emergency drills, and signal reading. By the time the squadron sighted Cape St. Vincent, the *Hector* was equal to two ships.

As such, she was a welcome addition to the diminutive force of Sir John Jervis, who was imperturbably patroling between Gibraltar and the Cape, waiting for the Spanish fleet to come from Cartagena through the Straits. Sir John was aware that a victory was very important to England, and was resolved to gain one. If his country were to continue to have the freedom of the Channel, much less her own coastline, the fleet of Spain could not be permitted to reach the fleet of France at Brest.

On the evening of February 13th, the ships of Don José de Cordova were seen at the Straits, and Sir John's vigil was ended. He had only to prevent them from sailing into Cadiz to force them into battle.

If Sir John spent a sleepless night, Captain Matchett did not. He snored soundly until dawn brought a messenger from the quarterdeck with the information that the *Victory* had signaled for the fleet to form in line ahead. Confident that Medlicott would dash topside, he dressed leisurely, nibbled at the breakfast on his table, and went on deck.

St. Valentine's Day was foggy, which the gentlemen of England took as a favorable omen. Slowly moving about in the mists, the great ships took station on the *Victory,* cleared for action, fed their crews, and waited for the hot sun to burn off the vapors and expose the number of their foe.

Captain Matchett quietly took his place on the quarterdeck, his large frame hulking above the slim figure of Lieutenant Medlicott. From time to time, the *Victory's* yardarms flew messages which each ship repeated along the line. Matchett unconcernedly watched his junior fly through the pages of the *Fighting Instructions,* and murmured the briefest comprehension of the various hoists.

As the hours dragged on, and the forms of the Spanish vessels became clearer on their

course toward Cadiz, Matchett went below-decks on a tour of inspection. His calm bearing left a trail of strength behind him. The men were silent during the transmission of commands, but he heard whispers as he examined the preparations of each gun captain. Giving no indication that he was aware of this breach of discipline, he paid particular attention to the gun deck where Medlicott would be in charge.

He found little fault. Each thirty-two pounder and crew of fourteen were smart and orderly. The long nines were well secured by tackle, flannel cartridges were conveniently stowed in racks, shot was well polished. Every gun captain was fully equipped with powder-quills for the touchholes, and demonstrated proficiency with the firing lock. Satisfied that the three-and-a-half-ton monsters would be properly handled, Matchett gave a short commendation to Medlicott's assistant, and climbed the ladder up to the quarterdeck.

Medlicott was standing by the mizzen shrouds, studying the Spaniards who were running with a fresh westerly wind for Cadiz.

"There are twenty-seven of them, Captain," he said, noticing Matchett.

"Two-to-one, eh?" Matchett murmured indifferently. "That makes the odds about even."

Medlicott was startled by the casual acceptance of what was generally thought to be certain disaster. The Spaniards were vastly superior, and on paper were guaranteed victory. Their firepower was overwhelming in volume, which made accuracy almost unimportant.

He glanced with interest at his commander. The captain was almost apathetic. "We shall have a warm day," Medlicott said, looking at the hulls to the south.

Agreeing, Captain Matchett nodded. "I will relieve you now, sir," he said courteously. "God keep you." His voice was both sincere and kindly.

"Thank you, Captain," Medlicott replied, and went to the ladder. On the second deck, he paused to speak to Thurston, who was too excited to hear anything about their leader. So, after a few words, the first luff proceeded below to his battle station.

THE Spaniards paid for their years of luxury ashore. Don José was unable to control the movements of his captains who, when the fog stripped them naked to English eyes, straggled into two groups rather than a firm line ahead. Sir John leaped toward the gap. Clapping on all possible sail, the British column flew like an arrow to separate their enemies. The aftermost and windward segment contained two more ships than Sir John's entire force and he was obliged to fight and defeat them before the dozen vessels toward the shore could put about and render aid.

The leading British seventy-four crossed ahead of the leading Spanish vessel and gave her two broadsides. The Spaniard luffed and headed north, rather than pierce the tightly-knit column of Sir John. His comrades followed, to parallel their attackers on the reverse course.

Thus the two fleets passed each other at the greatest possible speed, which was the Spaniards' dearest wish.

The *Hector* was next to the last ship in the column. Captain Matchett watched the battle approach him as the passing ships delivered broadsides at a range scorned by British tacticians. Ahead of him, Captain Horatio Nelson fumed at the prospect of losing the Dons, and waited for an obvious signal to come from the *Victory*. The British column could not turn in time to prevent the enemy from slipping past their rear, but each ship could tack in succession and quickly reverse the direction of their line.

As the Spaniards approached, Captain Matchett violated fleet discipline to the extent of sidling the *Hector* slightly out of formation. Being an old gunner, he knew the value of yards. If he feared that his irregularity might have been censured by Sir John, he was comforted the next moment by the sight of a captain gone mad.

Horatic Nelson, impatient for the obvious, deliberately wove out of line, plunged behind the *Hector* and ran to head off the Spanish van.

Captain Matchett slowly digested the implications of this horrible insubordination, kept the *Hector* on her course, calculated that the enemy would be within reach momentarily, and sent a messenger down to Medlicott to use hot shot. With an eye keener than any of his officers, he gauged the range to the Spaniards, and roared for a salvo.

The *Hector* was shoved to port by the concerted blast of the heavy guns. Before she took off the increased roll, her broadside flamed again. Matchett was well pleased. Hardly a minute had elapsed. Through his glass, he could note the entry of Northumberland iron into Andalusian timber. The Spaniards would remember the *Hector*.

Content to leave gunnery to Medlicott, he looked at the gallant ship of Horatio Nelson. The little fellow was engaged in bitter combat with several ships, all larger than his own. Matchett bit his lip. Instinct told him that Nelson was going to win or lose the battle for the British, and he did not care to follow a formation blindly.

"Captain!" shouted a midshipman in his ear. "Captain!"

Matchett turned. The midshipman pointed ahead through the powder haze to the *Victory*.

"She's flying signals, sir!" cried the youngster,

who was entrusted with communications. "I can't quite make them out."

Matchett glanced toward the embattled Nelson, and noticed that Collingwood, in the ship astern of him, was putting about. He made his decision. "No matter," he said. "We're going to fight the war." He barked at the quartermasters to put down the helm.

Slowly, the *Hector* heeled to leeward, astounding Medlicott, who discovered he first had empty ocean and then their own fleet at which to fire. The *Hector's* batteries fell silent, while a messenger from the quarterdeck passed the word to prepare both broadsides. Soon the *Hector* was headed north, closehauled to the wind, on the heels of Collingwood, angling for the fleeing Spanish ships.

Captain Matchett watched the stately ships grow in size, and did not regret his decision. Sir John was a martinet who broke captains for being a few yards out of formation. Sir John did not care to lose control of his subordinates and had a reputation which made them meekly obey his slightest command. Matchett was sacrificing all his years of patient, careful work, but at least he would have the consolation of sharing Nelson's crime of disobedience. He felt he could not have been in better company.

By whispers, the crew of the *Hector* became aware of their commander's boldness. Some were surprised, some were pleased, all were determined to justify their ship. Medlicott was confused. For himself, he would never have dreamed of quitting an admiral; a subordinate just didn't disregard the regulations so easily, regardless of how he esteemed a superior. As the Spaniards came within range again, he shrugged off thoughts of his captain's action and looked to his guns.

Nelson, supported by Collingwood, and then the leading ship of the British column, had checked the flight of Don José de Cordova, and brought the Spaniards into close quarters.

With a multitude of targets about him, Captain Matchett took his time. Not wishing to waste ammunition on a day when every shot had to count, and to balance off those wasted on the cannonading, he held his fire until Lieutenant Medlicott was almost frantic. Only when the *Hector* was two hundred yards away from a booming two-decker did Matchett release the tension of his crew, who were nervously observing the results of Spanish gunnery.

The *Hector* rocked in a cloud of smoke. Matchett backed a topsail to steady her for the next broadside, and gave his midshipman the pleasure of supervising the quarterdeck carronades. Medlicott's training showed in the holes which were blasted through the Spaniard's side. At that range, shot from the long nines could penetrate five feet of oak, and the Dons carried only two. Then, with reduced charges, Medlicott put a few red-hot cannonballs into the enemy two-decker, and Matchett was free to press on into the midst of the battle, while the Spaniards fought fire.

Matchett followed in the wake of Collingwood, adding his bit of devastation to the carnage wrought by his predecessor. The Spaniards were superior only in numbers. Their crews fumbled to discharge their weapons at five-minute intervals, and the British got off at least four in the same time.

Such a disparity in skill could have only one result.

Hauling off to port, Captain Matchett eased into the Spanish melee, passing between a pair of panic-stricken seventy-fours. With one broadside, he raked a Spaniard through the bows, and with the other, beat in a high-pooped stern. Finding the situation to his taste, he hove to, so that Medlicott could make full use of the batteries. The Spaniard to his port, bows severely wounded, could have run aboard him, but chose instead to back sails and fall away from the wind in an effort to round the *Hector's* counter. This was foolish, for the Spaniard thereby came within carronade range, and Matchett himself directed the fire of canister that cut down every soul on her quarterdeck. When the Spaniard did escape, his scuppers ran with blood.

Captain Matchett folded his hands behind his back, braced yards, clapped on sail, and took off after the ship Medlicott had been punishing with the starboard battery. This ship, too, fell off the wind, so that she could use her own broadsides to retaliate. Grimly, Matchett duplicated the maneuver, and matched guns with a desperate foe.

A heavy shot crashed into the port bulwark, broke a shower of splinters, and wiped out four men at one of the carronades. "Come with me!" Matchett cried to his signal midshipman, and leaped for the crewless weapon. His heart exulted as his body swung into the old, familiar rhythms of loading and firing. The Spaniard was a target difficult to miss, and Matchett had an excellent eye. "Take us alongside!" he shouted over his shoulder to the quartermasters, and then forgot he had a ship to handle.

BELOW, shocked by the concussion of heavy guns, Medlicott stared at the growing seventy-four and kept his powdermonkeys breathless with their dashes to the magazines. Crews fired by habit, being long past conscious effort. When Spanish shot screamed into the *Hector,* men hastily dragged aside the casualties who were in the way and left alone those who were not obstacles. Their whole world became concentrated in a hull which absorbed score upon score of heavy shot, gaped with

huge holes, and replied with diminishing feebleness.

When the *Hector* drew within a few yards, Captain Matchett returned to his duties grimed with powder and sweat. He sent a messenger down to Thurston to strip the second deck of men for a boarding party. He coolly surveyed the Spaniard for the most likely place to grapple, and delicately eased the *Hector* toward his foe.

His precautions were unnecessary. Even as flame spurted up from the Spaniard's afterhatches, her surviving senior officer staggered onto the bloodsoaked quarterdeck and ripped down her proud flag.

Thus, when the *Hector* gently rubbed sides with her foreign sister, Captain Matchett had the privilege of accepting a prize for the Royal Navy.

He discovered that the *San Cristobal* would be of little use to the Lords of the Admiralty. By the time he had personally extinguished the fires started by Medlicott's hot shot, the *San Cristobal* was fit only for a coffin. Her stern timbers were shattered and the starboard frames were riddled.

Regretfully, Captain Matchett transferred the few untouched and the many wounded Spaniards to his vessel, laid a train of powder to the *San Cristobal's* magazines, and returned to the *Hector*.

The *San Cristobal* proudly refused to be blown apart by an enemy, promptly heeled to starboard, and as water poured in through her ports, abruptly capsized. She filled and sank like a bullet.

This, then, was the role played by the *Hector* in the victory won by Sir John Jervis off Cape St. Vincent. With fifteen ships, Sir John had routed twenty-seven. He took only four prizes that managed to stay afloat; ten other Spaniards either sank or were too broken ever to sail again.

In her extremity, England had received a St. Valentine's Day present that cheered the nation into continuing a war which eventually led to Waterloo.

Though Sir John was awarded an Earldom, he did not forget the captains who had won the honor for him. Horatio Nelson was promoted to admiral, while Collingwood and Matchett were commended in the dispatch presented to Parliament. Far from being disciplined by Sir John, the three became public heroes.

Captain Matchett was too embarrassed to attend the reception planned for him at Portsmouth, and modestly remained aboard while his crew went on leave. He had his own private reward the day before the *Hector* was due to return to the Mediterranean Fleet.

He was writing to his wife when Lieutenant Medlicott respectfully rapped on his door for permission to enter.

"Sir," Lieutenant Medlicott said proudly, "I beg to report that all hands have returned from leave."

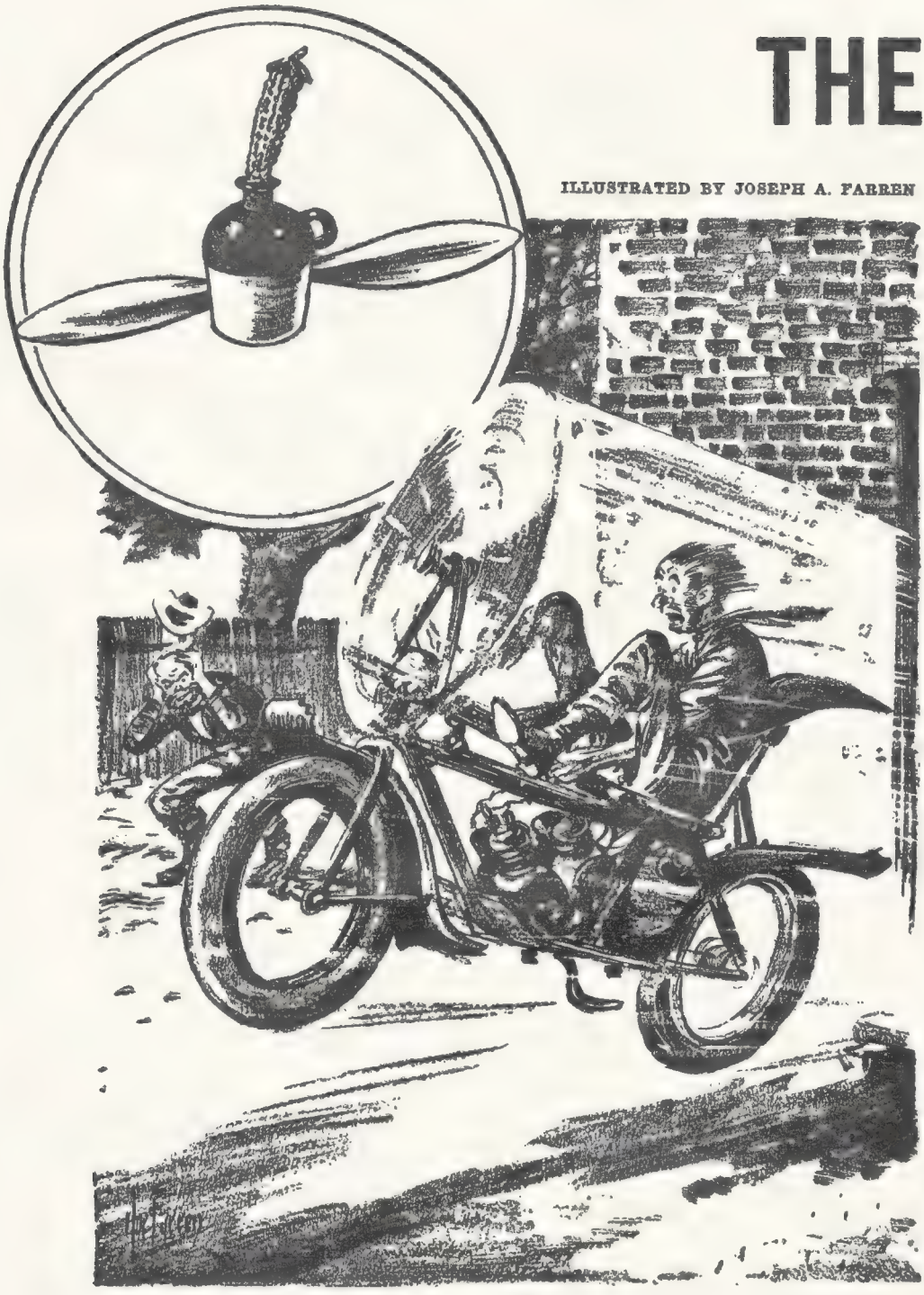
Quietly, Matchett acknowledged the information that the *Hector* had at last become a rarity in the Navy, a happy ship, whose crew would not forsake her, even if they were given ample opportunity. Nor did he betray his pleasure in having Lieutenant Medlicott address him without resentment, for the first time, as "Sir," indicating that his officers no longer sneered at his humble origins.

"Very well, Mr. Medlicott," he replied calmly, "we will sail on the ebb tide."

After his first luff had gone, he thoughtfully tore up the letter to his wife, and began again, telling her how fortunate he was.

THE

ILLUSTRATED BY JOSEPH A. FARREN



By DAVE GRUBB

TWO WHEEL DREAM

There was a mighty roar from the moonshine motor— and a great gust of wind.

THERE are some people who remember Two Bit McGinnis as the greatest man to come out of our town since Stonewall Jackson. And there are some who can't see him for nothing but a lunatic. I reckon somewheres between the two dwells the truth. But man and boy they all remember Two Bit one way or the other, and the wonderful Saturday of the Two Wheel Dream.

Two Bit McGinnis was the typesetter at the *Daily Argus* where I used to carry papers after school. He got that name—Two Bit—on account of he always asked for his Saturday pay in twenty-five cent pieces. Don't ask me why. I reckon if I could answer that one I'd know all the answers to Two Bit McGinnis. Like how he knew how to find four, five, six and seven leaf clovers while everybody else would be crawling around for hours with their eyes popping out and couldn't find nary one. Or maybe how he come to think up all of them wonderful inventions of his.

Two Bit was a tall, lanky fellow with sandy hair and a long, sad nose. He always wore tennis shoes, a red sweater and a baseball cap. Some folks claimed Two Bit had been a famous big league outfielder in his day and some claimed he just liked to make out like he was. But it didn't make no difference. A fellow didn't have to look twice at Two Bit McGinnis to know he was bound to make some kind of noise in the world.

Two Bit was in love with Lena Purdy that ran the bakery shop on Jefferson Avenue. Whenever he wasn't fooling around with us paper boys hunting four, five, six and seven leaf clovers or else tinkering around with some new invention in the back room of the *Daily Argus* you'd find old Two Bit hanging around up on Jefferson Avenue sniffing Lena Purdy's cinnamon rolls. Lena was a good-looking woman—a big, strapping, black-haired widow with china blue eyes. And the kind of smells that come out of that bakery shop of hers was enough to win any man's heart. The only trouble was she was one of them women that just naturally can't make up their mind about a thing. Lena'd spend half the morning over a tray of cookies trying to make up her mind

whether to put raisins on them or not. And finally when she put the raisins on she'd like as not pick them all off again. You never seen such a woman for dilly-dallying. Once she took the lemon filling out of two hundred cream puffs and filled them up again with cocoanut custard. That was Lena for you. So naturally when two fine-looking men like Two Bit McGinnis and Happy Jack Sullivan come courting her she liked to went crazy trying to decide which one to marry.

Happy Jack Sullivan used to go up and down Pike Street with a tray around his neck full of shoestrings, chewing gum, chocolate bars, jelly beans, hair pins, toilet paper and such trifles. That was how Happy Jack made his living. The heaviest part of his business was in the chewing gum line, naturally, but sometimes folks would haul off and buy a few shoestrings just to show they was good natured.

Well Lena was a great gum-chewer, so it just naturally appealed to her to have a man around like Happy Jack Sullivan. But on the other hand there was an awful lot to be said for Two Bit McGinnis and his wonderful inventions. Many's the time I've sneaked into Lena's bakery for a cookie and I'd see old Happy Jack and Two Bit standing at each end of the pie counter just glaring each other down like a pair of mean, frothy-mouthed pit bulls. But it never came to a fight or nothing. A man couldn't have very ungentle thoughts with the wonderful aroma of Lena Purdy's fine cinnamon rolls tickling his nose.

But such bragging went on as you never did hear.

"I sold banker Alexander three packs of Fan Tan chewing gum today," old Happy Jack would say real vain-like, shining his finger nails on his coat lapel.

And old Two Bit would snort and kind of shift around on his tennis shoes a little and say: "Lena, did I tell you about my new automatic chicken plucker? I'm bound to make a million on it before the year's over. Just jam old Miss Chicken in one end and she come out nekkid at the other."

"Oh my goodness!" poor Lena would say, all confused now. And she'd run back in the kitchen and fuss and fume around her stove, burning her fingers and spilling cake icing all over herself, trying to make up her mind which one of these fascinating gentlemen to give in to.

WELL I reckon the day that things come to a head will always be referred to in town as the Saturday of the Two Wheel Dream.

Two Bit had been fooling around for years with them inventions of his in that old back room of the *Daily Argus* and never made much of a splash with any of them. Old Cap Blankensop, the editor, gave Two Bit this room to work in and he never much minded his fooling around just so as he didn't set the type up late. He come near firing Two Bit once, though. Cap had lost his right leg in the war of 1898 so Two Bit invented him a lazy man's wooden leg that run with a clock motor in the knee. The motor got started going one night while Cap was sleeping and kicked his wife Angie clean out of bed. Angie was a right stout woman and she chased poor old Cap out of doors and made him sleep under the front porch. He was awful mad at Two Bit for a while.

It was late that Saturday afternoon when I finished my route and was hanging my paper sack up when I heard Two Bit holler at me from the doorway of his little room. "Davey boy!" hollers Two Bit. "Come on back here and see what I've made!"

I run back to where Two Bit was and peeked in the doorway. "Feast your eyes on this, Davey boy!" says Two Bit, pulling a big piece of canvas off of something and folding his arms like the professor at a Magic Show.

"Now don't faint, Davey!" hollers Two Bit, grabbing me like I was about to fall down. "It ain't a vision, Davey! It's real!"

I just stood and stared. I couldn't make head nor tail out of it. When you looked at it one way it was a harvesting machine but when you squinted one eye and backed off a piece you'd have swore it was a spinning wheel with a rubber tire on it.

"What is it?" I said.

"What is it!" screams Two Bit. "It's the marvel of the century, that's what it is! It's the McGinnis Two Wheel Dream!"

"What's it for?" I said, feeling awful dumb.

"What's it for!" hollers Two Bit. "It's for ridin' that's what! It's a motor-sackle, my boy, a motor-sackle! Only better! This here is a motor-sackle with an airplane propeller!"

Sure enough, there was a big two-bladed mahogany airplane propeller stuck up on the front of the contraption. I remembered when one of them barnstorming fellers had tore a plane up all to hell the summer before and Two Bit had bought the propeller off him for five bucks.

"An airplane propeller," I whispered, feeling the goose bumps crawling all over me.

"You dern tootin'!" hollers Two Bit. "And she don't run on gasoline neither!"

"No?" I whispered.

"No," hollers Two Bit. "She runs on something that's ten times hotter and full of hell!"

"What?" I managed to squeak.

"Whiskey!" yells Two Bit, jumping up and down in his tennis shoes to emphasize his words. "She runs on whisky, that's what! West Virginia moonshine, boy, fresh out of

Hoy Davisson's still. Man alive, it'll be the ruination of them big shot gasoline boys when this hits 'em! When that damn motor-sackle of mine comes a-roarin' down Pike Street with me rared back in the saddle I guess folks'll know I'm around. And that goes for Lena Purdy!"

WELL I stood there staring at the Two Wheel Dream and wondering if there was anybody living who was greater than Two Bit McGinnis. It's a fact you wouldn't take it for a motor-cycle first thing off. She had rubber tires and a saddle made out of an old split bottom chair and some kind of four cylinder motor. But the thing that took your breath away was that big two-bladed propeller rigged up on the front end.

"Look at her, my boy!" says Two Bit, his voice all low and trembly like the fellow in the movies when they've just found out who shot the old rancher. "Feast your eyes on her, lad! And don't never forget this day when your childish eyes viewed the greatest mechanical triumph of the age—for the first time! When you're old, Davey boy, you can tell them you was the first to see the McGinnis Two Wheel Dream!"

Two Bit yanked out his bandanna and blowed his nose in it. "By damn she'll take notice of me now," he muttered. "She'll know which one of us is the better man for sure!"

"Who?" I says, dumber than a mule.

"Lena Purdy, that's who!" hollers Two Bit.

"What's she done now?" says I.

"She ain't done nothin'." says Two Bit, setting down on his bench and wiping his head off with the bandanna. "It's that derned Jack Sullivan. He's a-movin' in for the kill, that's what! He's gone on a two-week vacation just so's he can rush poor Lena into a marriage she'll regret for the rest of her born days!"

"Vacation," I says. "Lordy, Two Bit, it don't seem to me like he ever has anything else but a vacation— peddlin' them little packs of chewing gum around Pike Street!"

"That don't matter," says Two Bit. "He's just a-doin' it to set himself up as something big. Lena's a good soul but she's easy took in by show-offs. Lordy, what a cheap trick! If I wasn't so proud I swear I'd— Why that dern ornery chewing gum salesman!"

"Two Bit," I says, "you must sure be in love."

"Ahhhh," groans Two Bit, leaning his head back against the wall and rolling his eyes like he was playing Shakespeare at the Orpheum. "Ah, if that dear soul only knew—the sleepless nights—the lonely days. Ahhhh!"

Old Two Bit McGinnis sure did look like a man in love all right, sitting there with that cuckoo look on his face.

"Well," I says, "you ain't goin' to leave him sneak up on her thataway, are you? You aren't quittin' are you, Two Bit?"

"Quittin'!" yells Two Bit, waking from his dream, and jumping to his feet. He smacked his fist in the palm of his big red hand. "Quittin'! Davey boy, I hain't even started in! If that half-wit thinks he's got a chance for Lena Purdy's hand he better think twicet. That's why I've strained my genius to the bustin' point! That's why I've rallied all my great mechanical resources and invented the Two Wheel Dream!"

THE BEST IN SPORTS FICTION!

From a Big League dugout to a goal stand in Coffin Corner—from a Stanley Cup playoff to a Rose Bowl climax run—you'll find sports fiction hitting its greatest, most thrilling heights, in NEW SPORTS MAGAZINE.

In the Big January Issue

"Ghost of the White Lines" by Roy C. Rainey.
"I'll Murder the Bum," a sensational story of the ring by Daniel Winters, and outstanding fiction and fact features by W. H. Temple, William R. Cox and many others!

Don't Miss the Great January Issue of

NEW SPORTS MAGAZINE!

15c at all newsstands.

On Sale Now!

He snatched his baseball cap off the work bench and tugged it down tight around his ears. "Let's go!" says Two Bit.

"Where, Two Bit?" I says.

"Up to Lena's bakery," says Two Bit, in a low voice. "I kind of want to drop a couple of hints for her to be on the look-out for a surprise tonight when I come roaring down Jefferson Avenue."

WELL, old Two Bit walked up to Lena Purdy's pie-counter with his thumbs hitched in his suspenders just as sassy as could be. Lena and Happy Jack Sullivan had their heads together over the bread case when we came in but that didn't seem to worry Two Bit none.

"Well, Two Bit," says Happy Jack, real sarcastic-like, "Lena's about made her mind up. It looks like you're gonna have to take your courtin' somewheres else."

"Oh, now, hush your mouth, Jack," Lena giggled and run back into her kitchen looking all confused and miserable and happy at the same time. Directly there come a big clatter as she dropped a big stack of pie tins.

"That's fine!" hollers Two Bit, so as Lena could hear him, too. "I just dropped by to tell you I'd finished it!"

"Finished what?" says Happy Jack, kind of perking up his ears.

"Why, the McGinnis Two Wheel Dream," says Two Bit real loud, munching on an oatmeal cookie at the same time.

"The which?" says Happy Jack.

"The McGinnis Two Wheel Dream," yells Two Bit. "It's a new type motor-sackle. I've turned down twenty sky-high offers on her so far but it looks like I oughta clear me a couple million if I play it right."

Happy Jack don't say a word—not even when Lena crept back out of the kitchen and stood admiring Two Bit sadly from behind the counter.

"Runs on corn liquor," says Two Bit, starting on his third cookie. "Just pour in a couple of gallons and she don't need filling for a month. Damn thing'll do around two hundred miles to the quart, I reckon."

"Mercy me!" gasps poor Lena, standing and staring at Two Bit with her eyes shining.

"Lena," says Happy Jack, reaching in his coat pocket, "have a stick of Fan Tan."

"Thanks," says Lena, stuffing it in her mouth.

Two Bit pulls out his handkerchief like he don't care for nothing and blows his nose like a bugle. "If you'd care to see a demonstration," he says, "you might drop round at the *Daily Argus* back lot around eight tonight." And with that he walks out the door leaving them both gawking like a couple of sick chickens.

Well I made for home then and Lord, I never ate supper so fast in my life as I did that night. We had my favorite, peach cobbler, but I didn't even finish the first helping. I just lit out the kitchen door and made for the *Daily Argus* back lot, because it was drawing close to eight o'clock.

Two Bit was there, fussing around the Two Wheel Dream, tightening up bolts and polishing up the gold paint on the wheels. He was dressed up fit for a wedding. He had on a new pair of tennis shoes and his baseball cap was all washed and ironed till you hardly knew him. Directly we heard footsteps and Lena Purdy and Happy Jack Sullivan stuck their heads in the doorway. Happy Jack cleared his throat.

"We was just passing by," he says, trying to keep his eyes off the Two Wheel Dream, "and we 'lowed we might as well drop in and say howdy."

"Howdy," says Two Bit, paying them no mind at all but just tightening bolts and working around the wheels with his little oil can, busy as can be.

Happy Jack cleared his throat again. "That there's some contraption," he says.

"Some folks might call it that," says Two Bit. And then he steps back a piece and folds his arms and give the beautiful Two Wheel Dream a good once-over. There she stood, all ready to go. Her tanks was primed with two gallons of Hoy Davisson's best corn booze and her old airplane propeller just a-glistened in the evening sun like a brand new dollar watch.

"Mercy me," says Lena, spreading out a little bitty handkerchief on Two Bit's work bench before she sat down. "My, Two Bit, that there sure is a pretty motor-sackle."

Two Bit bowed like a lawyer. "Thank you, Lena," he says, his eyes all lovey and cuckoo again.

"Sure must take right smart of thinking to invent a motor-sackle like that there," says Lena.

Happy Jack cleared his throat again. "It is right pretty," he said, "for them as cares for motor-sackles." Then he jams his hand down in his coat pocket and pulled something out. "Care for a stick of Fan Tan, Lena?" he says, holding it out to her.

"No," says Lena, her voice gone cold, but her eyes looking at Two Bit like she could just eat him up.

Happy Jack grunted kind of disgusted-like and plopped down on a nail keg. "How is it *supposed* to work?" he says to Two Bit all sneery and sarcastic.

"Oh nothin' to it," says Two Bit. "Just as easy as eating a poke-full of Lena's sugar cookies. All you do is just set down there in the saddle and give the propeller there a little shove and off she goes. Ain't nothin' hard about that!"

"Seein'," says Happy Jack Sullivan, lighting up a nickel stogie, "is believin'."

"Well now you just set still there about a minute longer, buddy, and you'll see," says Two Bit.

"Great day in the morning!" says Miss Lena, kind of sliding up alongside of Two Bit. "It sure would take a brave-hearted man to ride that there motor-sackle!"

Old Happy Jack is sitting there on the nail keg, just chewing his stogie to pieces. All of a sudden Lena leans forward real quick, giggles and plants a little kiss on the side of Two Bit's neck.

"There!" she says. "Now I can tell all my friends at the Tuesday Finch Club that I kissed the greatest man in Harrison County!"

WELL I might have guessed what would happen but I didn't, leastways not till it was too late. Happy Jack snatched his stogie out of his teeth and throwed it on the floor. And quick as a flash he jumps into the saddle of the Two Wheel Dream and slams the propeller with all his might.

Well to this day I'm not rightly sure what did happen. I read about it in the *Daily Argus* next day but somehow it seemed like it might really have happened half a dozen other ways. There was a roar like the world had blowed out from under me and the air was so full of dust that you couldn't tell if it was night or day. Old tack boxes and hand bills was flying every which way and Lena Purdy was screaming louder than the mighty roar of the moonshine motor. A big gust of wind knocked me clean off my feet and skidded me through the door into the press room.

At last when the noise had stopped and the dust had settled I sneaked a look from between my fingers. The McGinnis Two Wheel Dream was nowheres in sight. And neither was Happy Jack Sullivan. You could hear both of them though, way off down Pike Street somewhere—Happy Jack hollering his head off and the powerful motor of the Two Wheel Dream whining like a cross-cut saw. All over the town you could hear women screaming and men hollering when they seen the Two Wheel Dream come roaring past.

Out in front of the *Daily Argus* I could hear old Cap Blankensop yelling. "It's the Republicans, boys! They're a-tryin' to storm the town, them devils! Them de-evils! I knowed they'd try it someday! Grab your steel, boys! Them de-evils!"

Women were running around the streets herding their kids in and Sheriff Williamson was leaning out of the third story window of the hotel across the street with a glass of bourbon in one hand and his .44 in the other. Directly he started shooting it off in the air and yelling for order.

"Look out, boys! Here they come again!" hollered Cap Blankensop, shinnying up a maple tree as spry as a girl. "God a'mighty! Here come the Republicans, men!"

The people all screamed and made for the doorways as the Two Wheel Dream started back up Pike Street again.

"God a'mighty, boys!" croaked old Cap Blankensop. He stared all goggle-eyed at an old newspaper that had been blowed clean out the door of the *Daily Argus* and stuck in the branches of the tree. "It ain't the Republicans at all, boys! *It's the Kaiser!*"

And he let out a shriek and liked to fell out of the tree as old Happy Jack Sullivan roared past, his third time around, holding on to the Two Wheel Dream for dear life and leaving a dust cloud behind him twenty feet high. You never seen such travelling! Round and round the town went the McGinnis Two Wheel Dream, leaving uproar in its path, with Cap Blankensop and Sheriff Williamson leading the screaming like two preachers at a tent meeting.

Suddenly I remembered poor old Two Bit McGinnis. In all the commotion I had plumb forgot him. I picked myself up and walked back through the doorway into Two Bit's little work shop. He had fought a good fight and you had to hand it to him for trying. My blood boiled to think of that ornery Happy Jack Sullivan stealing the glory right out from under Two Bit thataway and like as not getting all the credit for the Two Wheel Dream.

Then I seen them. Two Bit and Lena Purdy. They were standing in the doorway together with their arms around each other's waists, watching the old red moon climb over the sycamore trees. Off in the distance you could hear the screams of women and the roar of the Two Wheel Dream and Sheriff Williamson's gun booming at the sky. But Two Bit and Lena weren't listening.

All of a sudden it hit me.

"Two Bit!" I gasped. "You—you forgot to put something on the Two Wheel Dream to get her stopped!"

"Forgot, hell!" says Two Bit, leading Lena Purdy down the lot, towards the smell of fresh cinnamon rolls, just like a hound dog flushing a quail.

PERMIT TO KILL

By WILLIAM LYNCH

The pony reared and swung 'round, even before Mike saw the injured 'roo.

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWARD SHENTON

MIKE splashed ice-cold water into his eyes and toweled his face hard until his cheeks pinked up. Mike was sixteen.

His face washed, he stood, hands loosely on hips, and contemplated the line of hills that bit unevenly into the western skyline. Over there, the Kanangra Pass was sleeting over. A veil of opaque mist hung loosely along the valleys, like a bordello's torn lace curtains; and beyond the Pass, Mike knew, the river flats would be cold and soft and wet.

He breakfasted on oatmeal porridge and then set about chopping a pile of broken fence palings into stove-lengths and stacking the pieces in the old tank that stood against the weather. His principal chore completed he took time out to stroll along to the office of the forest ranger.

Mr. Gaudry was strapping on his leggings. "We'll need these from now on, Mike," he said. "Kanangra's sleetin' over already."

Mike nodded. "I came up here on account of Darryl's blue cattle bitch," Mike said.

"What's the matter with the cattle bitch?" the ranger asked.

"That old bush 'roo—the red one—got her yestiddy. Tore her up the middle like she was a sawdust pup. Out by Water Creek."

The forest ranger nodded. "That's too bad," he said. "I'm sorry about the dog. Tell Darryl I'm sorry. She was a good heeler for the cattle, too."

"Point is, Mr. Gaudry," Mike persisted, "someone's goin' to shoot up that red kangaroo any time from now. It might be Darryl. It might even be me."

"I'd be awful sorry 'bout that." The officer frowned. "Shootin' up kangaroos is against the law round here, Mike. *You* know that."

"It's a bad law, sir," Mike said. "Darryl gave a lot of dough for that bitch. I wouldn't like it much if the 'roo took Silver. Permit or no permit, I think I'd go gunnin' for the 'roo. Silver's a good heeler, too."

"I hope not," the ranger replied. "I'd hate to have to run you in, Mike."

"Supposin' you write the Department and get out a permit to kill off the red kangaroo, Mr. Gaudry. That'd make it all good an' legal, wouldn't it?"

The ranger said yes, he supposed it would be legal, all right. "But the Department is having a little trouble round here with Sunday sharpshooters. They wouldn't grant a permit to kill."

Mike observed that the world was a mighty queer place when you got to thinkin' about it; and thence, he strolled along to the post-office, where he engaged in violent argument with the post-mistress over the point of there being no mail for him from his pen-friend in Santiago.

MID-AFTERNOON, Mike saddled the piebald and let Silver off the chain. The sheep dog heeled the pony and the pony lashed out with both hind legs, missing by yards. Silver yelped with glee and marshaled the geese and three house-sheep in tight formation against the stable fence. Mike angrily called upon him to quit, whereupon Silver nipped a few tail feathers from the nearest goose before setting off after the cantering pony.

There might be a few gregarious ewes in the wattle grove near Water Creek. Yesterday's count had shown fifteen to twenty sheep short at the drench muster. But what Mike wanted to do mostly was to take a quick look out there behind the Kanangra Pass, where the green flats stretched briefly along both banks of the Kowmung before the river became irretrievably locked between the great walls of the Divide. With winter almost here the 'roo mobs would be making for the river flats and that's where Mike was heading.

Mike and the piebald crossed Water Creek and followed the shallow stream round its elbow bend until the track deployed into the hills. He reined in at the top of Church Hill and looked down upon the Kowmung—the father of mountain rivers—where it twisted and roared down betwen gigantic granite walls, like a gleaming serpent. Mike permitted the piebald to pick its own way down the steep path that led to the ravine.

At the foot of the ravine, where the silt-beds made for soft going, the youthful horseman reined in his mount and listened intently for the familiar thump-thump of the 'roo mobs that always converged on the flats towards sundown.

At a spot immediately below him the enclosing granite walls withdrew from the Kowmung, giving way temporarily to level grassland, and it was here, through the blurred air, that he caught sight of the river mob.

At first he counted nine of them and then, suddenly, he saw the tenth, the great red devil who'd torn open Darryl's blue cattle bitch only yesterday. There could be no doubt of it, for the red 'roo was only too familiar round Yerranderie now, by reason of his pronounced savagery, especially during the lean winter months, when the mobs were forced to seek their food from the cultivated ground near the township.

He sat on a high rock, a statuesque figure, fully seven feet erect, his red coat, washed and smoothed by the driving sleet, gleaming like burnished copper against the pastel tints of new, winter grass.

Mike thought at once of the forest ranger and of the officer's strange reluctance to grant a permit to kill the red marauder who bossed and dominated the river mobs and whose vicious claws had ripped open the stomachs of the best cattle dogs in the area.

The piebald pony lifted a fore-hoof and stamped it back to the ground with a metallic ring. The red 'roo looked sharply across the ravine and then wheeled and leapt for the river, his gleaming body inclined forward to assist the tremendous propulsive power of a tail that could kill with a single sweep. Silver gave out a startled howl of discovery and swept forward to the river, barely ten feet behind the kangaroo.

"Back, Silver! Back! Here, boy!"

Mike knew what was coming next and forced the spurs deeply into the piebald's flanks. The pony snorted and reared and swerved away from the river.

Mike twisted in the saddle and stood stiffly against the stirrups, his stomach already turning over in a series of mixed fears.

The 'roo suddenly wheeled in the middle of the stream and reached out its forepaws for the dog. Silver saw the danger and screamed

his own mortal fear. He attempted to evade the poised forepaws but he was a fraction too late. The muscular paws reached outwards and downwards and held the dog firmly round the body. Then a powerful hind leg flashed up from the stream, five-inch claws, sharp as needles, distended and ready for the kill.

The leg poised in mid-air for a moment, as though its owner were gauging the degree of thrust, and then it flashed down in a single terrifying, tearing sweep. The dog shrieked out its insufferable agony as its stomach spilled out into the clear water and spread across the surface like thick, black soup. The kangaroo unconcernedly dropped the torn carcass into the river and wheeled towards the opposite bank. With a few great thrusts of its tail it easily cleared the bank and crashed into the thick scrub.

The dog's carcass drifted a few feet with the swift current and then brought up against a shelf of rock where it was fast held.

ALL of it happened so quickly that Mike, his face white and staring, seemed scarcely to have moved. Yet, apparently the piebald had inched towards the riverbank during the few seconds of the slaughter and now stood to his fetlocks in the shallow, fast-moving stream. Mike dismounted, unheedful of the ice-chilled water that poured into his boots, and picked his way across the bed of smooth, rounded precarious stones; the pony, dubious but obedient, following on a tight rein.

Mike wrapped the remains of Silver in a soggy sugar bag and slung the strange parcel across the saddle. Then he stood still and could faintly hear the breaking of dry undergrowth, up there near the summit of the ridge. He gently stroked the piebald's moist nose as he watched and listened until the sounds were lost. After that, there was only the confused murmur of the mountain river, its talk suddenly strange and irritating to the young horseman. Suddenly, too, he hated the ranges, mist-tipped and protective, and the law, which jointly gave sanctuary to the killer of Silver. What kind of crazy law was this that ignored the victim and protected the killer?

Silver had been a good dog, the best in all Burragorang, and worth any two dogs at mustering; but all the kangaroos did was to come down to the river flats and breed more mobs to clip down the valuable winter grasses of the Kowmung. And kill dogs. This would never be good cattle country until they cleared out the mobs of 'roos, and no man's dog would ever be safe out here in the hills.

Mike obeyed the piebald's urge to go home. The pony cantered across the flat and then slowed down to a cautious walk as they re-entered the ravine, even now deep in the evening shadows. The horseman glanced neither to right nor left, nor ahead, nor behind, but kept his eyes downcast to the yielding, shapeless bundle that rode easily on the pommel.

It was quite dark and the main street of Yerranderie was black with gloom when he reined in before the office of the forest ranger. He knocked and without waiting for any reply, entered the office. Mr. Gaudry was asleep before the stove, his legs fully stretched and his head resting back against the top of the chair. Spectacles hung precariously from the ranger's right ear. Mike took no heed of this but stood within the doorway, the sugar bag clasped in his tired arms. When the ranger sat up and retrieved his glasses, Mike took the sugar bag by its two ears and emptied the torn body of Silver to the floor, directly beneath the astonished gaze of the officer.

"That's Silver," Mike said.

The ranger was upon his feet in an instant. "Who did that?" he quickly demanded to know. He stooped down and thoughtfully examined the carcass. Then: "You don't have to tell me, Mike. That rip down the front is enough." He looked up into the burning eyes of the lad. "Was it the red one?"

Mike gulped and nodded. Then it was as if all the years of his false manhood fell away and left him young and naked and forlorn. He stumbled forward a few steps and buried his face in the rough folds of the officer's coat. Deep, scarcely-heard sobs filled the quiet room and hot tears splashed down upon the bare, wood floor, whence they were promptly absorbed by the parched boards.

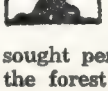
"Maybe you'd better get home and have your dinner, Mike," the ranger said. "You c'n leave Silver here and bury him in the mornin'."

Mike turned away and rubbed his sleeve across his eyes. His face still averted, he said, "You've got to give me that permit, now, Mr. Gaudry, sir."

Perplexity crept into the ranger's eyes. "I'll see what I c'n do, Mike. It's certain we can't have 'roos killin' off all our best dogs. I'll see what the Department says."

Mike replaced the carcass of Silver in the sugar-bag.

"If you don't mind, sir, I'll take him along with me now." He paused in the doorway. "An' thanks a lot for what you said—'bout writin' to the Department. Goodnight."



THE DEPARTMENT took a peculiarly personal interest in the matter of Mike and the red kangaroo—and two assistant-secretaries, by name of Wood and Byron, both sought permission to replace Mike's dog. But the forest ranger at Yerranderie would have

none of this and in the course of a lengthy correspondence he made it abundantly clear that he'd settle for nothing less than a permit for Mike.

The permit to kill one kangaroo came through in mid-June, when the Kanangra Pass and the Kowmung hills were deep in winter sleet that swept down from the Divide and across to the Burragorang Valley itself. The days were short now, and the nights long, and you had to move fast to get out there to the river flats and back in the daylight.

Mike read the permit through for the twentieth time and thought about the short days and how he might have to stay out there overnight, in the the self-same ranges that had thwarted even the sturdy heart of the explorer, Barrallier. No place for a boy, out there in the sleet-swept hills, where the temperatures fell down to freezing-point and where continuously the west wind sought out and found with its chilled breath every cave and crevice in the vast, exposed area of the Kowmung. Everybody in Yerranderie pondered on this, yet none had the temerity to come forward with an offer of assistance to Mike, although the ranger's wife specially knitted the lad a long, nameless woolen garment to go round all of him, from head to foot, and the ranger himself loaned Mike his Winchester .22 Repeater, that fired six high-velocity rounds without reloading. Hodges, the smithy, shod Mike's piebald without there being anything to pay and the mailman made a special trip into Camden to buy a waterproof groundsheet, which he presented to Mike. And the strangest thing of all was the telegram that arrived one day from the Department of Mines and Forests. It was signed by Wood and Byron and all it said was: "Good luck, Mike."

His permit to kill lodged safely in his saddle-bag, Mike reached the Kowmung Flats before the morning mists had melted from the valleys. From the rise approaching the ravine he selected a place down-river where clumps of tea-tree and stringy bark converged in the riverbed, and to this spot he led the pony, for the going was hard down the steep mountain slope. Within sight of, but hidden from anything that might venture upon the river flats in the brief afternoon, he unsaddled the piebald and gave it a nose-bag of chaff. Then he cleaned and loaded the Winchester and started walking high up on the side of the range that spilled down to the edge of the river. Once, he stopped and studied the tops of the trees. Up there, the westerly wind was clearly defined and, greatly pleased, Mike waded through the stream and took up a position downwind of the flats. Selecting a great spotted-gum he scooped together armfuls of bark and dead leaves and leveled them out into a soft couch. Then he wrapped Mrs. Gaudry's nameless woolen garment twice round his slim body and lowered himself to his stomach. From where he lay he commanded a full view of the flats and now it was a matter of lying quite still until the shadows began to lengthen along the river and the kangaroos came down from the hills to graze and drink.

Towards mid-afternoon the sun lost its little warmth and already the chill of night crept through the trees and up from the moist ground. Whispers of the sleet-blasts already could be heard up there beyond the mountain caves and nowhere else was there any sound, not even the sound of a bird, nor the harsh croak of a frog. With the cold there came the first stabbing ache of loneliness and gradually there stole into the boy's mind the unutterable desolation and forlorn-ness of his mission and, momentarily, he prayed to be away from this unfamiliar place and back at Yerranderie. But he thought of Silver then, and he ran his fingers along the blue, cold barrel of the Winchester to the front sight which he polished with his thumb, and the determination to stay here by the river flats was suddenly firm again.

BY FOUR o'clock night was already beginning to close in upon the deep mountain valleys. Up there on the peaks it was still light, but night came first to the valleys and along the narrow river flats.

With the shadows there came fresh, sharp sounds. There, to the left, a twig snapped and it was as if a shepherd, somewhere, had cracked his whip. From a dozen directions there came strange, new, sharp sounds, of creatures moving cautiously downhill, and, occasionally, the earthy, hollow thump of a thick, powerful tail belting the ground. Mike could plainly hear his own heart beating now; even the sound of his breathing became positive and pronounced in the new atmosphere of alertness.

He saw them, then. At first they were dark blurs against the rim of trees but as they moved towards the middle of the flat their outlines were more clearly etched against the shadow-free strip of grass. They came with apparent carelessness, in twos and threes, from a dozen different directions, but Mike knew that the first unfamiliar noise, or the merest scent of a human, would send them flying into the hills from whence they might not return for more than a week.

Both cold and loneliness were gone now as the lad's eyes strained ahead, seeking out and examining the scattered groups of 'roos, searching for something lighter and larger than the black, squat figures that hopped with delicate, precise movements towards the depressed center of the flat where the tendrils were lush and plentiful. The wind whipped across the

flat into his eyes and smarted them, but told him, too, that he was still downwind and that was good and it didn't matter overmuch about the sting that penetrated his eyeballs and made his head swim with cold. Somewhere out there, there had to be a red kangaroo, had to, had to, had to . . .

The bush sounds became more numerous and the 'roos were converging upon the flat from every direction. Mike examined each new arrival with eager, intense cold-filled eyes. He relaxed the fingers of his right hand and alternately opened and closed them to shake off the numbness that had settled in the joints.

Something snapped against his temple and clung there coldly, and this he knew was the first rude slap of the sleet storm that was gathering beyond the Pass. A distant sound, like washing, came to his ears and cautioned him of the folly of staying here longer. His jaw began to tremble and it became necessary to clamp his mouth tightly to stop the uncontrollable chattering of his teeth. The chill oozed up from the ground, through the leaves and bark and through his body until his stomach ached. He knew, then, he'd have to quit. He relaxed, and allowed the waves of disappointment to wash over him. His numbed hands abandoned their grip on the Winchester and plunged into his shirt-front, to a warm place beneath his armpits. The sleet hit him full-blast at that moment and forced his body into a tight protective little knot. Thus he lay, his eyes shut tightly. He reached out a hand and pulled Mrs. Gaudry's woolen wrapper across his face and because he was wearied and cold beyond all conception, Mike fell asleep.

WHEN he awoke, in the false dawn, there was sufficient light to enable him to see clearly across the flats. He was wet clean through and it was as though his body was encased in a film of ice. He sat up sharply and looked towards the Winchester. The barrel was gleaming wet. Mr. Gaudry would be peeved about that, he supposed. Throwing aside the woolen garment he grabbed the rifle with the intention of drying the barrel as best he could, and at that precise moment he saw the red kangaroo.

It sat rigid on a rock on the farther edge of the flat, its sensitive nose pointed down-river and its forepaws twitching. A few 'roos were still idling round the edges of the flat but the main body had gone back to the hills. Mike knew then why he'd missed the red fellow last night. Evidently he was the mob's look-out and rarely approached the river flats until his charges were safely back in the ranges. Mike gauged the distance to be less than a hundred yards and adjusted the rear-sight of the Winchester. He eased forward upon his stomach and pressed the stock tightly against his cheek. He took careful sight but the image of the target blurred as the moisture oozed across Mike's outraged eyes. He remembered what the forest ranger had said about sighting and lowered the rifle. Taking a deep breath, he uplifted it again and brought it directly to the target. He fired, once, twice.

The red kangaroo reeled backward, stumbled a few steps and fell. Mike fired three times more, but the aim was high. The kangaroo sprang to its feet and leapt uncertainly in several directions, but quickly returned to the edge of the ravine.

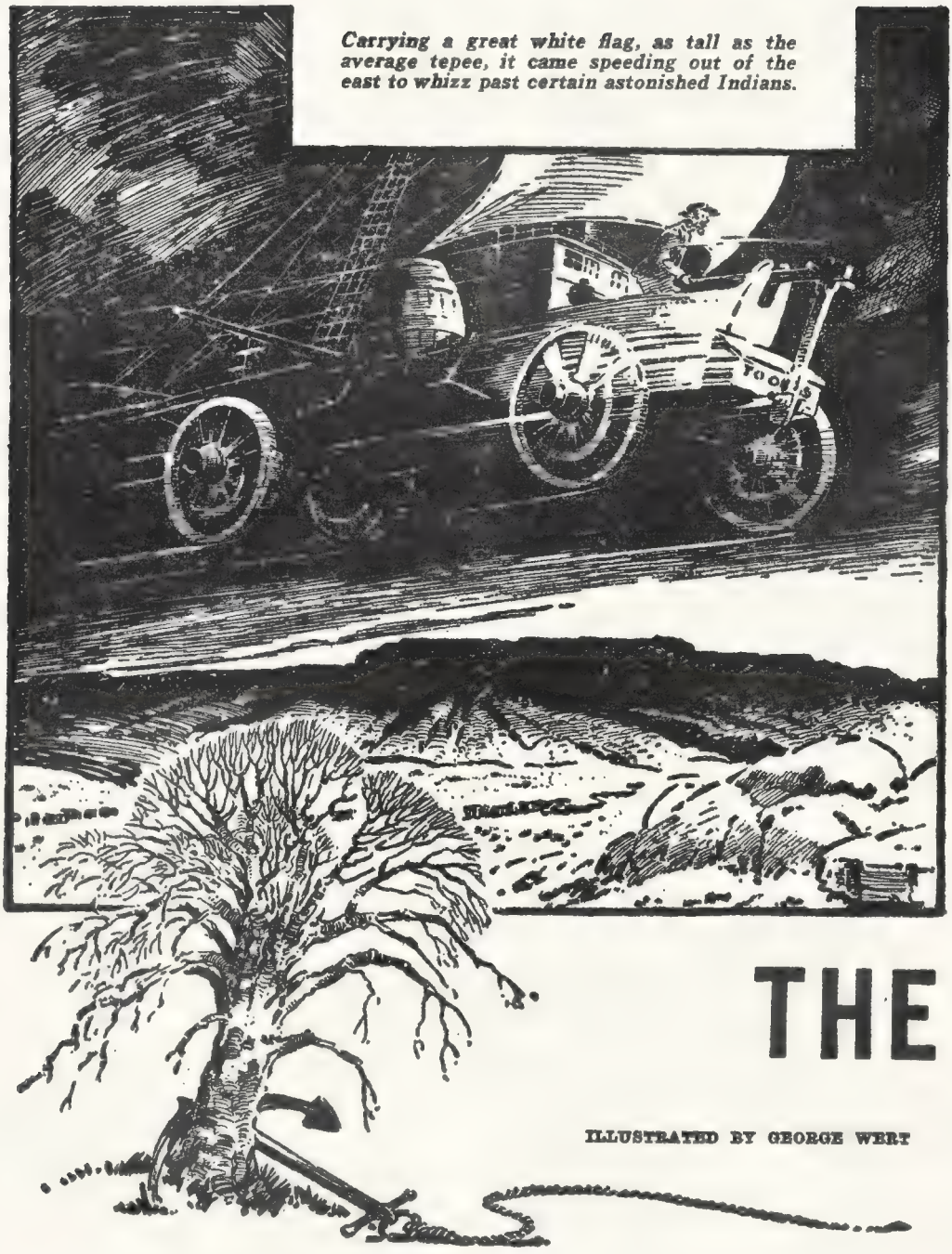
Mike ran down-river to where the piebald was tethered and threw the saddle upon his back. He mounted and galloped across the length of the flat to the mouth of the ravine. The red kangaroo had been hit once, probably twice, and would never make the steep ascent on the farther wall of the ravine. Mike dug his heels into the pony's flanks and forced him down between the high, precipitous cliff faces. Halfway down he halted the pony and listened for the tell-tale thumping sounds of the powerful tail. There was nothing.

Mystified, but with a fast-gathering hope, Mike pushed the pony to the bottom, through a thick clump of bottle-brush and thence towards the upward slope of the bed.

The piebald reared and swung round, even before Mike saw the injured 'roo. But there it was, at the cliff base and even as Mike glimpsed it, the 'roo leapt out, its mouth savagely open and its great forepaws already seemingly clasping the piebald's head in a death-embrace. With three gigantic leaps it was beside the pony and tearing open its hide with powerful sweeping thrusts of the curved, steel-like claws. With his free hand Mike fired the remaining shell into the maddened kangaroo but the piebald's frenzy spoiled the aim. The pony reared and met the kangaroo breast-on and Mike felt the blood pulse out from beneath the horse's exposed neck.

The kangaroo was fighting man-fashion, now, its forepaws stabbing out and back with the sustained savagery of a heavyweight bruiser, and with each downward thrust of the great claws fresh lacerations appeared on the shoulders and withers of the piebald. Once, the 'roo lunged desperately forward and clasped the piebald's neck in a vicious embrace, at the same time uplifting a powerful hind leg in a series of stabbing, penetrating slashes. The pony reared again and lunged forward with its forelegs. Thus upstanding, its spotted belly was momentarily fully exposed. With incredible speed the 'roo darted in and ripped the tough hide with a single hind-leg blow, making the blood flow freely from a gaping two-foot

(Continued on page 146)



Carrying a great white flag, as tall as the average tepee, it came speeding out of the east to whizz past certain astonished Indians.

THE

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE WERT

By GLENN R. VERNAM

SPIRIT WAGON

THERE is an odd legend concurrent among the Indians of the Southern Great Plains section. It deals with a mysterious vehicle which once made its appearance in the land of their fathers. This wagon, so agree the stories of the old men, was a fearsome apparition. True, its form was much like the ordinary white man's conveyance; but there all resemblance ceased. For instead of being drawn by horses, or oxen or some similar orthodox means of motive power, this wagon appeared to propel itself. Not only that, but so powered, it rolled across the prairie at a pace which would have been a credit to the best of buffalo-running ponies. Carrying a great white flag, as tall as the average tepee, on its forward end, it came speeding out of the east to whizz past certain astonished Indians and disappear over the horizon into the heart of a blood-red sun. No one knew from whence it came or what its purpose was. They only saw its passing in such an amazing fashion across

A Fact Story

the face of their land. Truly, a spirit thing, to be mentioned only after presenting the pipe to the four winds.

It is not likely that a great many white men ever chanced to hear of the Indians' legendary visitor. And those who have probably put about as much stock in it as most of us do in the folk-tales of our own ancestors. Yet, there is a conjunctive story of the old Southwest which might well lend credence to the redman's mythical four-wheeler. Its locale was Westport, Missouri, where Kansas City now stands at what was then the eastern terminus of the old Santa Fe Trail.

This particular evening, Westport's more convivial citizens had gathered at Yoakums' Tavern with no premonition of anything other than consuming the regular pre-supper appetizer. It was the end of a hard summer day in 1853 and they felt the need of refreshment. Just a little something to relieve parched throats, and then home to supper and bed.

Everything was progressing normally, and had advanced to the slightly mellow stage, when a clatter of wheels and squeal of brakes turned curious eyes toward the street. A moment later, the owners of the eyes suddenly began to question the number of appetizers they had imbibed. The object before the door was certainly nothing any sober man had a right to behold. True, it was a wagon; but who ever heard of a wagon being turned hind end foremost and propelled by a boat sail instead of draft animals? And the man who had cast anchor and was now busily furling down the sail . . . ? Characters out of Moby Dick and Treasure Island just didn't appear casually in the middle of the western prairies!

Fears for their own personal condition, however, were soon allayed. The stranger was an actual flesh-and-blood creature. Shaking back the reefers of his pea jacket, he dropped lightly to the ground and faced the townsmen under the weather-warped wooden awning. His name, he volunteered with a decidedly salty twang, was Thomas. He hoped they would honor his presence by their company inside the tavern's hospitable doors.

Perhaps curiosity had something to do with it. Or it might have been that the odd visitation had revived their thirst. Anyway, there is no record of anyone refusing to honor the visitor. One and all followed his rolling gait up to the bar. And one and all stretched their ears to lose no word of his explanation.

THESE explanations started along about the third drink, gaining periodical momentum as the evening wore on. A few were vaguely disappointed in the stranger's blunt refusal to discuss his background and previous activities, but this was soon lost sight of in the press of other disclosures. His life, Thomas intimated, might be said to have begun in Westport; its mission to expound the virtues of his revolutionary vehicle and outline the position it was bound to assume in western transportation.

His voice rose in eloquence as he pointed out the steady increase of traffic on the western trails. The country was growing. People were moving westward. All that was needed to corner this booming freight and passenger service was a company equipped with a fleet of his sailwagons. Such vehicles possessed all the advantages of ships or railroads. They would eliminate the long, devious routes, so necessary in providing feed and water for livestock, for a crow's-flight course straight across the prairie to any desired destination. Moreover, their swifter speed would answer the ever-haunting cry of transportation demands. He had worked out all details with his experimental sailwagon. He understood the art of moving inanimate objects by windpower. All that remained was to put his remarkable plan into execution. Here, Westport was offered the golden opportunity to furnish the modicum of financial backing necessary for rolling stock and preliminary operations.

But Mr. Thomas, like many another fertile-brained genius, before and since, moved on a different plane than his less imaginative fellows. And the great majority of Westport was much like the great majority anywhere. As Thomas enlarged on his scheme and cited the benefits to be derived thereof, slow winks went around the room while fingers made circular motions beneath the brims of hats. Someone suggested the appellation of Windwagon Thomas, and glib tongues agreed that the wind was not all confined to the wagon.

The sailorman was built of stern stuff, though. He wasn't one to be laughed off lightly. Particularly not after the heft of an evening spent in a tavern. Well satiated with both their ribald jibes and equally ribald liquor, he abruptly announced that he was sailing to Council Grove and back as proof of his assertions. It was a hundred and fifty miles to Council Grove. The round trip should give the scoffers something to think about! And with that parting shot, he up-anchored, shook out his sail and rolled westward over the rising swells.

Yoakum's patrons had something that made frequent fraternization a merry worthwhile object during the ensuing days. It wasn't often that anything equal to Thomas and his windwagon came along to enliven the monotony of everyday affairs. Many a laugh was livened at the flowing bowl as they recalled the stranger's efforts to inveigle them into such a crackbrain scheme. He was gone now, probably afoot somewhere along the trail; giving birth to some

other outlandish hallucination, no doubt. They would never see him again, but his brief visit had given Westport an enjoyable interval that would brighten many a future memory.

WESTPORT'S memory received further brightening before the week was over. It came with the familiar rattle of wheels and squeal of brakes. The tavern door framed a cluster of astonished eyes as Thomas cast anchor and pulled down his sail. More astonished still, were the eyes that scanned the letter he presented. It was a statement signed by the blacksmith at Council Grove, stating that Thomas and his sailwagon had completed the westbound half of his three-hundred-mile trip. The return half spoke for itself.

This placed the situation in a different light. More refreshments were consumed while comment waxed high. And the refreshed gentlemen were quick to spread news of the achievement. In the course of hours, several of the town's leading citizens evinced a decided warmth toward the project. From there on, the great majority was still the great majority, only possessed of a different viewpoint.

The following day saw a company formed to finance Thomas' idea. It was to be known as the Overland Navigation Company. The board of directors included the progenitor, Mr. Thomas; Dr. J. W. Parker, Westport's eminent physician; J. J. Mastin, a progressive young lawyer; Henry Sager; and the Indian agent, Ben Newsome.

As a beginning, they set about building the first of what was to be a fleet of freight wagons for carrying the Santa Fe trade. It was a stupendous affair, almost as huge as the enthusiasm which went into its making. Fashioned after the style of the ordinary prairie schooner, its body was twenty-five feet long by seven wide and towered to the tops of gigantic twelve-foot wheels. This big box was completely decked over. A mast and single mammoth sail was set well forward. It was made to travel stern foremost, the steering wheels being arranged rudder-fashion behind. The sponsors watched its growth with all the awesome pride of a mother hen who had inadvertently hatched an ostrich.

At last came the great day. The new vehicle was ready for launching into the broad grassy distance. Civic pride demanded that this include a trial cruise for the benefit of such passengers as cared to participate. Plans speedily formed themselves for a gala occasion that would fittingly commemorate this dawn of a new era in transportation history. Most of the more exultant celebrants adjourned to Yoakum's emporium the evening before, to fortify themselves for the event.

Some were still there, or had returned for early-morning invigoration, when the warming sun ushered in a new day. By the time the huge sailwagon was hauled out onto the open prairie by four sturdy oxen, spirits were well bolstered for whatever might be required to complement the epoch-making occasion. Mr. Thomas, being the central figure, could do little else than try to maintain his well deserved position throughout the proceedings. If he succeeded a trifle too well, it could have been due to the fact that nature had favored him with such an ideal day for the demonstration.

The weather couldn't have been more perfect. Overhead, a mellow sun smiled down from a clear, cloudless sky. A generous rollicking breeze billowed the ocean of grass and set incautious spectators racing after skittish headgear. Hostlers detached the prosaic oxen and stood aside to watch progress destroy the means of their livelihood. The few inevitable die-hard skeptics prowled the outskirts of the crowd, shunned by all forward-looking men.

Perhaps Skipper Thomas' rolling walk was a bit eccentric as he hurried about, bellowing safety injunctions to his prospective passengers. Or possibly it was the force of the wind which caused his erratic tacks to port and starboard. But be that as it may, he went about his task with all the ardor of an old-time sailing master.

The passengers were ensconced below decks in the body of the wagon. Ingress was obtained by means of a ladder and open hatchway in the deck. Master Mariner Thomas planted himself beside the ladder top to see that orderly progress was made among the eagerly embarking voyagers. Also, to make sure that those who had left their equilibrium at the tavern were afforded helping hands for the ascent and safe billeting below. He wasn't going to have tthe effects of his maiden voyage marred by unstable excursionists tumbling overboard.

At last, all was ready. The final passenger was in his place. Thomas yelled a final word of direction and hoisted the enormous sail. The brakes were released to the protesting squeaks of new body timbers. Slowly the big wheels revolved forward. They gained speed. Cheers of spontaneous encouragement rose from the less adventuresome souls who had elected to remain behind. The great sailwagon took the wind over her stern to roll with amazing swiftness across the level prairie.

Faster and faster they sped, the monstrous vehicle swaying to the push of the wind. The big wheels passed unimpeded over badger holes and hidden hummocks. The skipper spat into the wind and began roaring a spirited old seafaring ballad of red-blooded men and women, whose repetition would be out of place in this mundane world. He hadn't had so much fun since he helped run a four-master out of the the China Sea ahead of a typhoon.

THE wind unloosed a fresh burst of volume as they headed downgrade into a long swale. The effect was instantaneous. Such unprecedented speed proved too much for some of the less hardy travelers. Their gladsome shouts and songful voices were turning to yells of distress. They demanded to be set ashore before a most certain shipwreck destroyed all chances for a better way of life.

But the bold captain was of a more heroic mold. He seemed bent on emulating Columbus —and sailing on and on. Bellowing his desire for a certain lady of Singapore, he swayed to the plunging of his meteoric craft and edged the sail a trifle more into the wind.

The increasing cries from below, however, were not to be denied. Even a daring skipper must at times relinquish personal desires in deference to the owners' wishes. This is especially true when he is trying to impress those same owners with the practicality of his vision. Captain Thomas was not, in all likelihood, too befogged in his own enjoyment to consider the future. At any rate, he reluctantly hauled the sail around and heaved on the tiller to set a homeward course.

It was at this point that the fickle goddess of human destiny walked out cold on the skipper. Something about the steering gear jammed just as he brought the sail about and, catching the wind on the other quarter, the wagon suddenly reversed itself.

This fiendish act of perversion created chaos below. The company promised everything from tearful repentance to painful mayhem. It is reported that one of their number joined the church and took up missionary work soon afterward. And when the steadier members of the party managed to rise from the litter of broken bottles and seasick memories, it was only to meet a duplicate catastrophe as Thomas suddenly succeeded in shifting sail to shoot the craft forward once more.

Then, to add to the general discomfiture, it was discovered that the jammed steering gear had locked the wheels in a slightly cramped position. Instead of taking its precious cargo back to town, the wagon was now headed out around a mile-wide circle at its same wild, heedless gait.

Thomas was evidently a stubborn man. He gave every evidence of a firm determination to break the mad craft to his bidding or run it to death in the effort. Possibly, too, the spirit of adventure and Yoakum's potions still ran strong in his veins. At any rate, his meaty ballad continued to rise above the clatter of wheels as he swayed with the careening vehicle and maintained a full-spread sail.

Not so with the others. They had suffered enough. Their earth-bound souls told them that such continuance could lead only to death and destruction. One by one they crawled desperately forth to plunge overboard like so many bullfrogs deserting an ill-omened log. Luckily, there were no women and children.

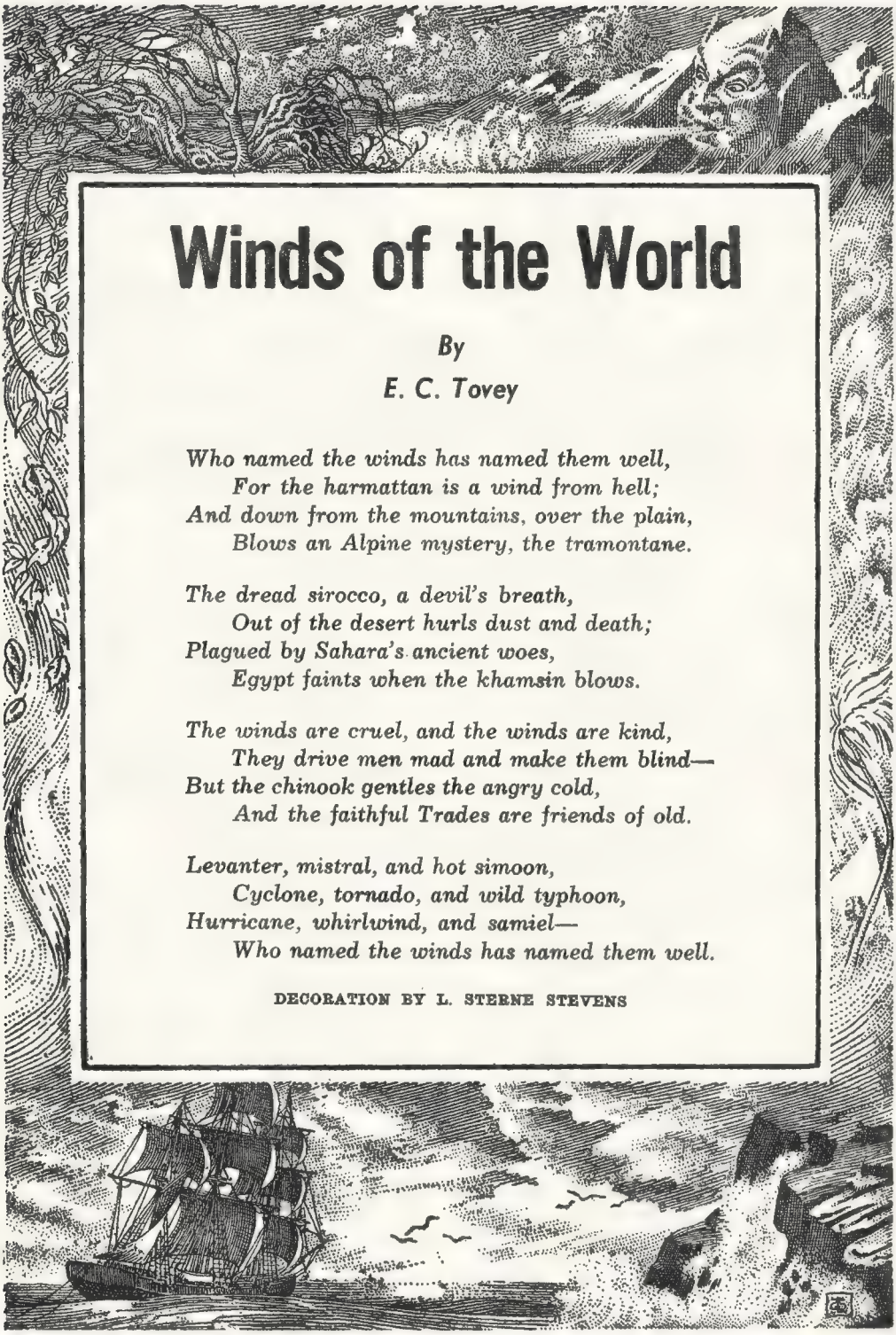
Thomas, alone, stayed with the ship. A true captain, he was, staunchly exemplifying all the principles of seagoing tradition. On around the circle he swept, the unsteerable craft rocking and swaying beneath his widespread feet. No doubt time would have proved his actions justifiable had it not been for a steep-sided buffalo wallow which appeared directly in his path. One side of the wagon dropped into the depression, the steering gear jerked loose to cramp the wheels still farther, and the wind-filled sail whipped around amidships to do the rest. Captain Thomas picked himself up out of the grass to focus a somewhat addled gaze on one wheel still revolving slowly above the mass of wreckage. Later, he joined his compatriots in the long walk back to town.

And this was only the prelude. Back in Westport, he found his erstwhile associates regarding him with distinct distaste, if not with frank hostility. Some even went so far as to bluntly accuse him of an outright attempt to obtain complete control of the enterprise by killing off the rest of the company. However that might be, one ride on the wheels of genius had convinced Westport that mankind could get along very nicely without windwagons. Dissolution of the Overland Navigation Company was voted unanimously before the last man to stagger back into the tavern had his elbow properly arranged at the bar.

History fails to state whether Thomas was a short-tempered man or if he was a defeatist at heart. Perhaps his former occupation had simply taught him to bow to the inevitable. All we know is that the ensuing hours at Yoakums persuaded him that Westport wasn't ready for progressive innovations.

Morning saw him seated in his original sailwagon, facing the open prairie. His lips were set in a hard line. Not one iota of information did he offer regarding his intended actions or future destination. With a single withering glance at the examples of prudence gathered around the tavern door, he released the brakes, hoisted his sail and passed from view.

And that was the last anyone ever saw or heard of Mr. Thomas and his sailwagon. Did he wreck the queer craft and take up his abode among some distant friendly natives? Perhaps he perished of hunger and thirst on the high, dry prairies. His scalp might possibly have gone to decorate a red warrior's shield or war bridle. Or did Dame Fortune repent her harshness and deliver him safely to some far-off shore? *Quien sabe?* There is only the redman's old legend of an undrawn spirit wagon speeding westward under a white flag as tall as a big tepee.



Winds of the World

By

E. C. Tovey

Who named the winds has named them well,
For the harmattan is a wind from hell;
And down from the mountains, over the plain,
Blows an Alpine mystery, the tramontane.

The dread sirocco, a devil's breath,
Out of the desert hurls dust and death;
Plagued by Sahara's ancient woes,
Egypt faints when the khamsin blows.

The winds are cruel, and the winds are kind,
They drive men mad and make them blind—
But the chinook gentles the angry cold,
And the faithful Trades are friends of old.

Levanter, mistral, and hot simoon,
Cyclone, tornado, and wild typhoon,
Hurricane, whirlwind, and samiel—
Who named the winds has named them well.

DECORATION BY L. STERNE STEVENS

DATU'S

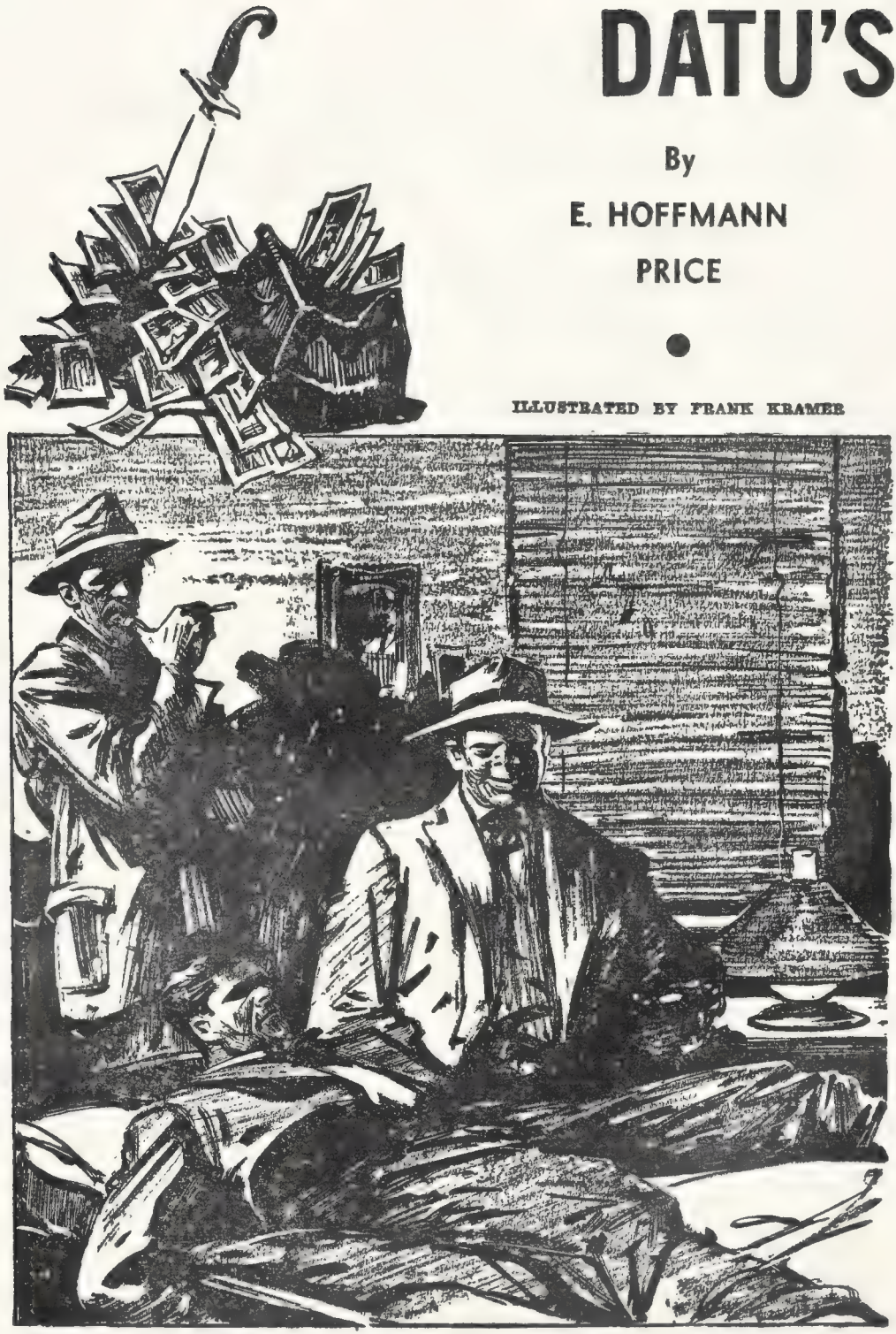
By

E. HOFFMANN

PRICE

●

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK KRAMER



DIVIDEND

IT WAS GOOD, having another white man on the plantation; it was good, Pete Barstow told himself, as he and Weyler rode among the rubber trees, to have an American voice join him when he cursed the inroads of root fungus, and of white ants. He reined in his shaggy Mindanao pony, and for a moment watched the plantation hands who, having felled a tree, were digging out the infected roots.

"Poco más, Angeles," Barstow said to the straw boss.

The knotty-legged Visayan looked up to squint from beneath beetling brows. "Dig more deeper, *señor?"*

"That's right, and don't skip any chunks."

They probed and forked the earth. From time to time, they found and held up pieces of roots, so that Barstow could see the white threads of the fungus which made the infected tree die back.

"Sta 'ueno," Barstow finally said; and then, to Ross Weyler, "They're a good crowd, but they still can't see what difference there is

"You can't hold out," Weyler finally said. "Sign it and get it over with."

between leaving a few bits, and getting every damn bit!"

Ross Weyler chuckled sympathetically. "That's natives for you. But you'll get used to it."

For the first time, Barstow began to examine the stranger critically. *"You'll get used to it . . ."* Odd way of talking to one who, after planting rubber in Kabakan before the war, had survived three years of guerrilla warfare and going native.

"I'll get used to it," Barstow admitted, amiably, and wondered whether the strain of repairing the damage done by Japanese operation of the plantation had got under his skin.

Weyler was a good deal bigger than Barstow, whose five feet six was not enough over the native average to make him conspicuous; and now that Weyler had spent some days eating regularly, his big frame was filling out. Weyler had a hearty voice and a laugh to match: a rugged, square-faced chap with jolly eyes which twinkled under shaggy brows. He'd been prospecting in Surigao till the war had driven him to cover. Then, flushed out and caged in the concentration camp in Davao, he'd finally escaped to get so thoroughly beyond pursuit that months had elapsed before he heard the first rumor of V-J. His trek out of unexplored territory, and down the Mulita River on a bamboo raft still gave him and Barstow a lot to talk about, evenings in the bungalow; though Barstow at times did wonder about the porters who, after carrying the malaria-stricken refugee a good many miles, had dumped him to stumble about afoot, until, half starved, and festering from leech bites. Weyler had collapsed among Barstow's rubber trees.

There the tappers had found him.

As though reading Barstow's thoughts, Weyler grinned with all the triumph of one who has outwitted fate. "A fellow can get used to anything but hanging," he said. "And it's tough going without quinine."

"Atabrine's better for the complexion," Barstow retorted, referring to the yellow stain which showed not only through his suntan, but even in the whites of his eyes. His quip, however, irritated him. Though tired of saying it, tired of hearing it, he'd said it again—perhaps because isolation had reduced the number of things one could say spontaneously.

THE men were still tapping too deep. The cuts of the "single herringbone" pattern which made a panel on each of the trunks were too wide. "Skibby bastards!" Barstow grumbled, as he noted some especially crude work. "They got these fellows into habits it'll take months to wipe out."

"Years," Weyler corrected, heavily, and smiled to take the sting from pessimism which he intended as humorous exaggeration.

"All right, have a good laugh!"

Weyler shrugged, discreetly deciding against overdoing wry humor.

Presently, owner and guest were watching four men who spread lime and dug it into the ground from which an infected tree had been taken a month previous. Conditions would have been worse, Barstow realized, if he had not made a point, back in 1936, of setting the seedlings out at twenty-foot intervals, one hundred and ten to the acre, instead of "twelve by twenty-four," or closer. In addition to keeping the root fungus from spreading so rapidly, the wider spacing had made for quicker growth, so that most of the trunks were more than fifty inches in girth. Large for their age, they had stood up better under Japanese overtapping. Barstow told himself these things as a tonic. For months, he'd been needling his morale to maintain the lead in his race against the effects of neglect and abuse.

". . . nice having Weyler around . . . now that he's on his feet, when's he going to move on? Story sounds O.K., but . . . two kinds, ordinary, and goddam liars . . . we've got to quit tossing off gun-barrel gin. I'm going on the wagon till good liquor comes in from the States . . ."

Weyler reined in abruptly. "Pull up a second," he commanded.

"Now what?"

The guest critically studied Barstow's angular face and tightly drawn cheeks; he studied the sun lines and the strain lines about the eyes. "You're tackling a tough job, Pete, worn to a fine edge—don't tell me off yet! Keep your shirt on, fellow! You've been wondering for the past hour just when I'd have the good grace to get the hell out of here."

He stopped short. He smiled just enough to give his squarish face a challenging expression, though there was no insolence in it; only man to man frankness, plus an irritating tinge of that superiority which almost always accompanies shrewd wit and a sharp eye.

Barstow met the glance, checked his retort, and answered, "That's right. Most people have a place to go."

"Some don't."

"I've met them, too."

Weyler gestured. "Pretty clean area, around here. You've O.K.'d it?" Getting Barstow's nod, he went on, "Which shows I can be useful."

"How? By taking over a section that is clean?"

"Of course, though that wasn't what I've been thinking of."

"Spill it, the suspense is terrific."

Weyler pointed. "That tree over there is infected."

"Psychic, huh?"

"Dig and see. It's starting. You won't notice it for a while unless you really know. Like I do."

Barstow wanted to knock the man out of the saddle. He wanted to dismount and invite his guest to a quiet spot to flatten him. He wanted to say, "Why, you fat-head, who do you think you are?" He wanted to do all these things, and he wanted to add a list of painful, obscene, and anatomically impossible feats for Weyler to perform with, by, and for himself; and those completed, Weyler could oblige everyone by leaping into Liguasan Marsh.

But Barstow said, "Let's dig and see."

Weyler nodded, smiled appreciatively. "That's the kind of man I like to work for."

"I don't need anyone to work for me."

"You do, only you don't realize it. You're ready to blow a head-gasket."

"Never mind the tattle-tale gray psychology. I don't scare too well."

"Naturally not, *Captain* Barstow."

"Been learning things, huh?"

"Can't help it. Anyway, let's dig."

"For fun and information, yes. For betting, no."

"All right, the job doesn't depend on the answer. But you need a *segundo*."

"You see what I am up against. And a good one is expensive."

"That is something we'll talk about later, Captain."

"OK, *Teniente!*" Barstow felt good-humored again, and wondered for a moment why he had been so griped. "Pacífico! Andrés!" He hailed a nearby group. "Dig here!"

The men set to work. If the boss wanted them to make mud-pies, that was his business. Barstow lit a soggy "Isabela." The air was so humid that he could almost squeeze water from a handful of it. He watched the knotty-legged laborers digging and picking, and shuddered at the thought of ever again having to exert himself.

Why not take Weyler up, put the guy second in command, and run up to Lake Lanao for cool air and recuperation?

Pacífico held up a piece of root.

Barstow said to Weyler, "What's wrong with it?"

Weyler answered, *"Sphaerostilbe repens,"* and took the chunk. He knifed the cortex; between that and the wood were black strands of fungus. "Getting a start."

Barstow backed off, squinted at the foliage. Finally, he perceived, far up, the first symptoms of the tree's dying back; and he said, "I get it now, but I wouldn't have."

"Takes time," Weyler admitted, modestly. "I started in Negri Sembilan, twenty years ago."

"Must've been pretty young."

"Young, but not dumb."

Barstow wasn't even riled by that quip; he was too busy asking himself, "How many more of these trees aren't as good as they look on the outside?"

PETE BARSTOW, coming down from Kabakan, always drove his jeep past Army headquarters to tempt some low-ranking mug to stop him. Though Barstow's title to the jeep was clear, the oftener that fact became a matter of record before the general left Parang, the better things would be for Barstow.

When he saw the O. D. limousine with a flag whose center had two stars, he saluted, with burlesque snap, and a friendly grin which meant, "I don't have to do this, but you're a good guy, considering your rank."

The limousine pulled up.

Barstow's plantation foreman exclaimed, "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph! Now what we do wrong?" and also pulled up.

A sour-faced GI quit the wheel of the Army car and came over to say, "All right, fellow! The general wants to talk to you. *Siki, siki!*"

"Go *siki* yourself, *hombre!*"

Barstow was a bit worried. Maybe the man with two stars had raped too much paper work in "surveying" a jeep to give it to a civilian, in return for favors which saved the Army a lot of grief in inner Mindanao. With a colonel nailed in the ETO for a $1,500,000 jewel "liberation," and high rankers hooked in Java for going south with stolen treasure, he couldn't be sure of anything.

"Yes, sir? How's tricks, General?"

The leathery-faced man beamed. "Splendid, Pete, splendid. Just get in?"

"Just this minute."

"Huh. Where's the rubber?"

"Oh—the rubber. Sending it down the river now, to Cotabato."

The general grinned wisely. Barstow grimaced, and said, "Well, I did need a jeep, I needed it bad, to drive the agitators till I got that old Fairbanks-Morse."

"To be sure, to be sure. Well, get in, have a drink."

"Huh—have a drink?"

"Don't tell me you don't use the stuff!" He nudged Barstow toward the limousine.

"Thanks, General, but—um—I mean—"

"You're in no hurry. Get in."

So Barstow got in. Presently, as they rolled past officers' quarters, and toward the old Spanish *comandancia*, Barstow began to figure, "Maybe the old guy has got his orders, he can finally unlax and drink with a civilian."

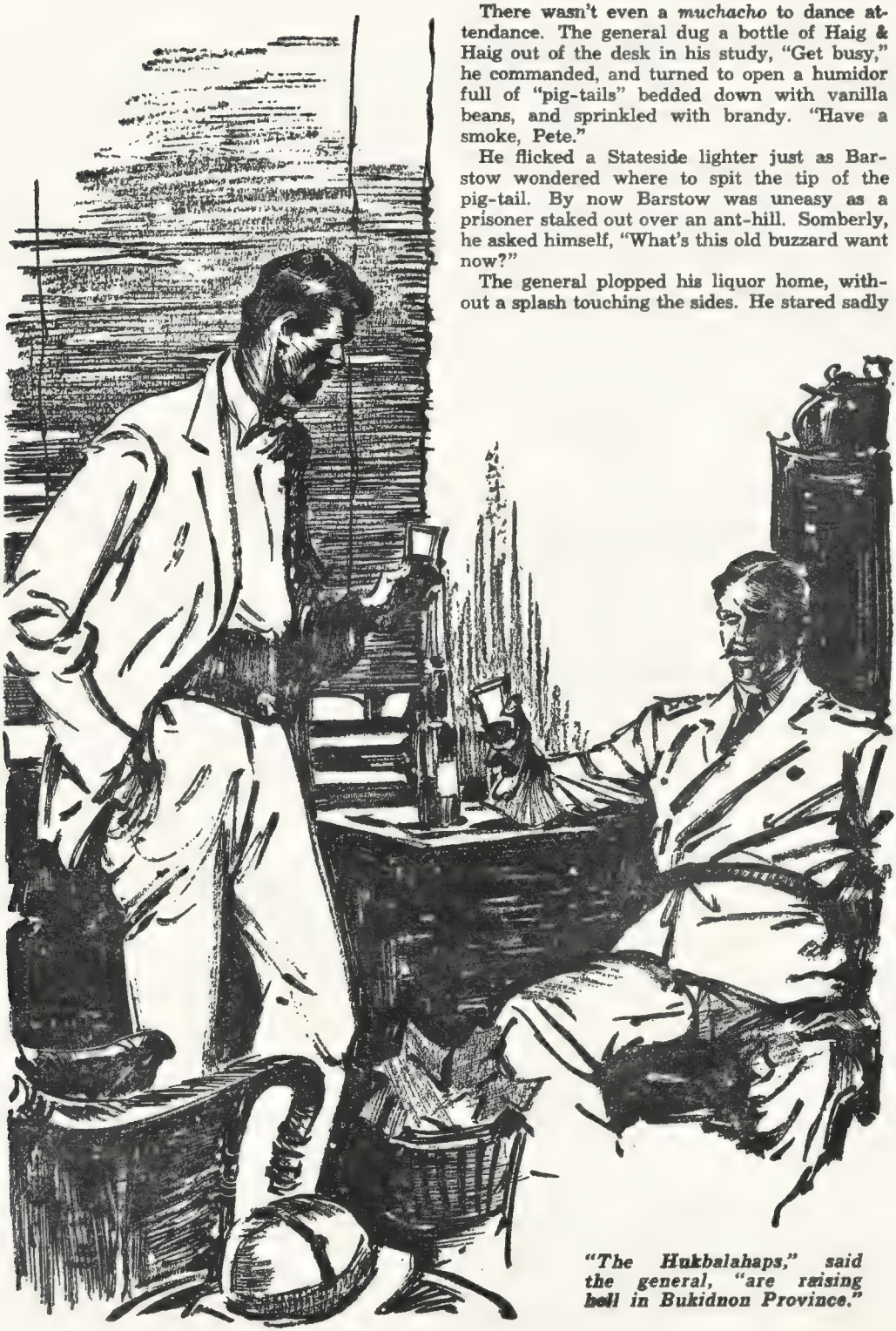
But he still had qualms. This was the sort of thing that happened only when news correspondents were around, or PRO drivel was being cooked up for the recruiting program: *"Join the Army, and drink Balabac Punch with the General."* Or something of the sort.

But there weren't any cameramen around the masonry fortress; only garrison prisoners sweeping the patio.

There wasn't even a *muchacho* to dance attendance. The general dug a bottle of Haig & Haig out of the desk in his study, "Get busy," he commanded, and turned to open a humidor full of "pig-tails" bedded down with vanilla beans, and sprinkled with brandy. "Have a smoke, Pete."

He flicked a Stateside lighter just as Barstow wondered where to spit the tip of the pig-tail. By now Barstow was uneasy as a prisoner staked out over an ant-hill. Somberly, he asked himself, "What's this old buzzard want now?"

The general plopped his liquor home, without a splash touching the sides. He stared sadly



"The Hukbalahaps," said the general, "are raising hell in Bukidnon Province."

at the empty glass. "They're going to retire me," he said, finally.

He didn't sound at all, or look at all like a man who had commanded 15,000 troops in battle. Barstow caught himself up sharply and retorted, "Huh! Better'n planting rubber."

"Income tax will eat a terrific hole into it."

Barstow straightened up. "Wait a second! I know a retired major that don't pay a cent Federal income. How come?"

"Probably physical disability. I'm being retired for age. Unjust, inequitable I call it, discriminating against me."

Barstow snorted. "It's worth a hundred or so bucks each month to reach your age without any disabilities. Ever stop to figure how much sweating I do each month before I clear even as much as you'll have left after that tax? I don't weep for you."

"Maybe not, Pete, maybe not," the about-to-be-forgotten man said, with manful resignation. "Still, it is tough. I'd just about got myself forced into facing the inevitable."

HE TILTED the bottle twice. Enormous slugs. At current rates, about $4 worth, gold, in each glass. Barstow began to get a glow. Must be sad, come to think of it, quitting the service after forty years or so. Got to feel sorry, even if only a pure fool would ever stay in any army that long . . . three years guerrilla work in the bondoks was enough for me!

"Yeah, I guess you'll miss it."

"You don't know how I'll miss it."

He tilted the bottle. Barstow wanted to protest, but didn't. He was glad, a moment later, that he had not. Presently the general said, "Very few people, military or civilian, I can really talk to."

"Well, it'll soon be over, sir."

"That's just what maybe it won't be. I'd got all set to leave. Now, I can't."

Barstow sat up straight. "How come?"

The general hunched forward. He said in a whisper that could not be heard farther than the far side of a large parade ground, "Hukbalahaps. Raising hell in Bukidnon Province, on the big ranches. Share the wealth and all that."

"You mean the Huks go for that crap?"

"And until they're peaceably unsold, they are dangerous. Not a bit like Datu Hassan; he was easy, not being an idealist. That sensible fellow believed in property rights."

Barstow chuckled. "Yes, his right to somebody else's property."

"Now, these Huks are spreading discontent. They're trying to rebuild the country. They're against everything. Anti-clerical, anti-U.S., anti-imperialist, anti-Roxas, anti-Osmeña."

"Sound like Communists!"

"Can't be proved, but might be."

By now Barstow began to understand a number of things; not all, but more than enough. He laid out a twenty-peso note. The general asked, "What's that for?"

"What I did to earn a jeep cured me. I am not fooling around with Hukbalahaps, not even for a case of your whiskey."

He got up. He took his hat and jammed it into place, decisively.

The general got up. He took the twenty-peso note, folded it carefully, and thrust it into his shirt pocket. "Well, thanks, Pete, this'll help with my income tax."

Barstow gulped, blinked, and then admitted it had served him right, getting high, mighty, and sardonic with a man who had risen from buck private to major-general.

"Look, I am not an army."

"An army is no good here. We don't want civil war, we don't want an armed truce like they have up in Luzon, where the Huks are dug in deep. We want a smart fellow to nip it in the bud."

"So instead of retiring, you have to stay till the nipping is done?"

"Mmmm . . . something like that. At all events, until I have finished my survey. I want to know who started it, who the agitator behind the scenes is, who's paying him and how much."

Barstow grinned. "Never heard of a guy going to bat for the under-privileged unless he got a good payoff."

"They do get rich, those agitators, ranting about the woes of the under-privileged who didn't know they were under-privileged till someone told them they were. All right, Pete, now that we understand each other—"

Barstow shook his head.

"We understand each other too well, General. I am not a big estate owner like those up in Bukidnon. I make just groceries, with not a Chinaman's chance of retiring. Agrarian unrest —that's what they call it—doesn't mean fellows like me. My gang—"

"They worship the ground you walk on," the general said, as though talking to himself. "I once had an outfit like that."

He grinned when Barstow's change of expression told him that he had picked the very phrase which the American planter used, strictly to himself, in expressing appreciation of the loyalty of his men.

"That's overdrawing it, but they're for me. Look how they went along to drag in the Skibby that wouldn't surrender. Look at—"

"You know the country, Pete," the general broke in. "You're no bigger than a fair-sized native. You lived with them so long in the bondoks you can act and think like one. You have influence with a lot of them, you can go into Bukidnon where any other American would get himself boloed, and where the same would

happen to any Filipino working for his own government. The Filipino'd be damned as a bureaucrat, a fascist. You'd have a chance."

"Only I am not a trouble-shooter for the Cruces and the Marranos and the rest of the big landlords; let them handle their own gripes with their tenants. Far as I am concerned, the Huks can go hukking around from now till I love a Jap. Well, thanks for the refreshments, General."

"You know, that outfit that worshipped the ground I walked on? Damn if they weren't on the edge of mutiny before I woke up. Well, thanks for dropping in, Pete."

CHAPTER II

SHARE THE WEALTH

ON HIS RETURN, Barstow followed Weyler on a tour of inspection. He watched women and children collecting the glazed earthenware cups into which the latex flowed, after the three hours of tapping, from dawn till nine. Knotty-legged men wearing knee pants, mushroom-shaped hats, and thread-bare shirts whose tails flopped in the breeze, toted GI cans of latex to the vats where the milky fluid was strained, and treated with acetic acid to speed the coagulation. Others took the coagulated slabs to the rolling machine, now driven by a noisy old Fairbanks Morse.

"What is that?" Barstow demanded.

Weyler nodded and smiled. "Told you I'd pay my way!"

Barstow studied the wooden rails, and the little cars with wheels neatly cut from molave trunks. On each car was a rack perhaps five feet high. Men came from the rolling mill with sheets of rubber which they hung on the rack.

"Load 'er up, roll 'er into the drying shack," Weyler explained, needlessly. "Saves a lot of time."

When he looked at the smoked rubber which had accumulated during his trip down the river, Barstow admitted that Weyler had speeded things up—not because Weyler's ideas were unheard of, but simply because Weyler was not harassed, or wondering when and if the investment would blow up.

Once they came to the tin-roofed bungalow, Barstow dug into his dunnage and got a bottle. "This rates one. *Ding hao!*"

Weyler shook his head. "Don't cut me in on any bonus."

"How come?"

Weyler gestured. "Everyone's in on it, not just me. What kind of showing could there have been if they'd been bucking me while you were away?"

"Mmm . . . you got something there." Then, patting the shoulder of the bottle with burlesque reverence, "But how far will this go?"

Knotty-legged men in mushroom-shaped hats were toting cans of latex to the vats.

The *segundo* chuckled. "They'd not even like Old Taylor. But you can figure out some other kind of bonus."

That was what Barstow did, then and there. As far as plantations went, his people had a good pitch; still and all, a dividend was in order.

Shortly before dusk, all hands lined up while the plantation clerk dished out pesos. Later, hearing the yells and laughter in the laborers' *kampong*, Barstow knew that a cockfight had been organized, thanks to the unexpected dividend which made betting possible. He hoped there'd not be too many knifings. . . .

That Weyler had done something to buck up the morale became increasingly apparent, during the week which followed. Then Barstow began to wonder whether a good thing couldn't be overdone. While everyone worked with something approaching the grimness of Philippine Scouts on the drill ground, Barstow became uneasy because voices no longer rang out freely. At his approach, there were silences, and an unnatural intentness on grubbing, hewing, poisoning white ant colonies.

The straw bosses were awkward in their manner when he paused to watch a task. Andrés and Pacífico dummied up, as if trying to forget that they had followed him in battle. They avoided his eye. Barstow could barely fight off the temptation to corner one of the pair and demand a showdown.

"Treating me like an inspector general!" he muttered, as he rode on. "Next thing they'll stand at attention and talk in the third person!"

There was a great difference between Malay ceremony and wooden formality. Worst of all, Barstow felt a twitch between his shoulders whenever he turned his back on a group. The time lag between his passing, and their resumption of work and chatter made him uncomfortable.

That evening, circling back toward the bungalow, Barstow came to a decision: the speed-up had to be stopped. This was Mindanao, and not Detroit. Bonus or no bonus, a Filipino wasn't wired up for production-line methods. The natural tempo was easy, as fitted the tropics. A burst of enthusiasm had to be followed by a proper let-down. Weyler . . . the name began to have an unpleasant taste in Barstow's mouth . . . there had been a Governor General Weyler in the Philippines, during closing years of the Spanish Regime, a tyrant and a slave driver, literally and figuratively. The Spanish Weyler's whip cracking had precipitated an insurrection, shortly after the execution of Rizal, the Filipino patriot.

Barstow straightened up in the saddle, and drew a deep breath. Now that he knew what he had to do he felt better. That a few laborers, making for the *kampong*, lifted their hats but did not say *"Buenas noches, señor!"* ceased to make him squirm. A fiesta and then, a general easing up— that'd do the job.

Silently, one of the houseboys came to take his horse. The screen door slammed behind Barstow. There was a disturbing quality in the noise, as if the sound had shocked an emptiness. Then he got it. There wasn't anyone in the bungalow. No servants awaited his return.

"Weyler!" he called, and an echo from the tin roof mocked him.

According to the day's plans, the *segundo* should have been the first to return.

BARSTOW'S footfalls echoed as he tramped about. No sign of Weyler. No glasses, no cigarette butts; and in the man's room, straw chinelas waited beside the iron bunk.

He went to the rear and hailed the boy who had taken his horse. *"A donde está*—you, there, where the hell's Mr. Weyler?"

"Don't know, sir."

That the man didn't know was all right; but the voice made it plain that he didn't care, and that whoever had any curiosity could satisfy it by prayer, meditation, or going out to see for himself. There were two things for Barstow to do: ignore the snub, or else, give the man a sound booting, or a going-over with a riding crop. Some planters, and the mortality rate of such was high, liked the latter course. Barstow preferred the former though not merely because in the long run it was healthier. The *tao*, poor devil, had spent centuries being booted, swindled, robbed by money-lenders, and enslaved by big bosses. His only redress had been a swish of the bolo, followed by flight to the jungle.

Speaking of bolos, Barstow began to examine the floor very carefully. He looked in closets. He found neither corpse, blood, nor signs of recent mopping.

It was dusk now. Fireflies made blue-white blobs in the shadows. He could still see the big black butterflies whose wings were coated with a powder said to destroy human eyesight; the natives feared them. Barstow sniffed the air. There were no smells of cooking; no spicy fumes from stew pots in the *kampong*, nor the nutty odor of roasting maize, nor the stench of sun-cured fish. And no voices.

"Bad, when the women quit screeching and the kids quit laughing. . . ."

Barstow went out the back door and hailed the stable boy. No answer. He went to the stable. He found only the ammonia reek of manure. There were no horses—neither his own, nor Weyler's. The hair at the back of Barstow's neck began to twitch and creep. He shivered, and not because his sweaty clothes were cooling faster than they were drying.

Barstow was deliberate about going back into the bungalow. His lips were dry. There was a metallic taste in his mouth. He poured himself a shot of Old Taylor. He could as well have gulped kerosene. This told him, in terms which he could not deny or laugh off, that he was ready to run, and never mind where. Just get going and keeping going.

He said aloud, "The silly so-and-so that used to crack off about whistling your way past a graveyard was nuts. When a fellow is scared, when he really has the bejeezus scared out of him, he can't pucker his mouth enough to whistle!"

Barstow proved this by trying, and failing to whistle.

Casually, as though moved by idle curiosity—so casually that he fooled himself—Barstow went to the warped and checked secretary which he had brought inland from Cotabato. He opened the drawer, and found only oil stains which outlined the shape of the pistol he had kept there. He'd never believed in riding about with a belt gun. Toting a weapon made it seem that a man didn't trust his own people; and it made him fair game for any prowler who had gun-hunger, which most Filipinos had.

No use looking for the 12-gauge Winchester, or the .30-06, or the Japanese Arisakas he'd taken as prizes in guerrilla warfare. Also, no use lighting out afoot. Barstow struck a match and lifted the chimney of a kerosene lamp.

A gecko made its obscene, derisive cry.

Barstow answered, "They have, buddy, they already have."

He sat down to ponder on Weyler's fate. One sure thing, he'd not have any rescue problem. Take that copra planter, down the river: Joe Higgins, a tough and rugged fellow who used to come over to play pinochle. Barstow, going over to find out why Higgins hadn't showed up, had found that fever wasn't to blame. Higgins still sat in the living room. Higgins' head, however, was in the wrong place. It lay in the corner. Whether Higgins had got tough with the wrong man, or fooled with the wrong woman, nobody could say—because not a plantation hand was there to be questioned.

"I won't have to rescue anyone," he said, "and nobody has to rescue me. That chump of a Weyler . . . that horse's rump of a Weyler . . . No, Weyler's not a chump. I am a chump for letting a chump like Weyler work for me!"

He got up and went to the bathroom. There was enough sunwarmed water in the oil drum, up on the roof, to furnish a shower. He put on clean skivvies, white ducks, and straw sandals. Then he went into the living room. If they wanted him, they'd take him; and somewhat sooner if he ran, or even walked into the jungle.

"They've got to take my hide," he reasoned, "whether they want to or not. To keep me from squawking about what happened to Weyler. They figure the general is my buddy. I can't tell them he isn't, and that I won't talk him into sending out some troops. . . ."

HE HEARD voices outside. Silence followed, after which came a tapping at the door. "*Señor,* we want to talk to you."

"Come on in, everybody."

They came in, some looking sheepish, some defiant, but most of them, poker-faced. Not one was visibly armed. During the pause which followed, Barstow began to suspect that they had waited for him to take a shower and get dressed.

"What can I do for you?" he finally asked, after noting that Andrés and Pacífico, the oldest and most reliable of his wartime comrades, were among the first half dozen to enter.

It was sharp-eyed Miguel Serrano who answered, "Sir, we have join the Hukbalahaps."

Barstow, remembering his glib answers to the general in Parang, felt foolish. He asked, "How much does it cost?"

"We get the special rate for lots at once," Miguel explained. "Is usually twenty pesos, we pay only ten."

"That's mighty nice," Barstow observed, amiably, and dug into his pocket. "Who's collecting, and what rate do I get?"

There was a general change of faces, a crossing of glances, a stirring and shifting of feet. Andrés and Pacífico were looking beyond Barstow, through the bungalow walls; Miguel gulped, blinked, then said with visible embarrassment, "Sir, you do not understand. You are the landlord. Only the *tao* is join the Hukbalahaps."

Barstow nodded. "I understand. I've been robbing you folks, I've been overworking you. I've teamed up with money-lenders to keep you in debt to me, and whenever one of you wanted to run away to work somewhere else, I got the constabulary to round you up and throw you into the hoosegow."

"No, no, *señor!* You have been one very nice boss. But, the *tao,* all *taos,* every damn all, we what you call it, hang together. So, we take the plantation, you understand, that is how it is done by the Hukbalahaps."

Barstow wanted to laugh, but that would have been considered undignified on his part, and insulting to his callers. Instead, he said gravely, "Yes, I understand. You like me. You worship the ground I walk on. Only, a principle is a principle, and you are men of honor."

The tense faces relaxed. Several exclaimed, "Yes, that is right! You understand, you are *simpático.*"

Barstow gestured grandly. "It is yours, all of it. I wish you luck in getting out from under the hand of the landlord, the *encomendero,* the money-lender, everybody that has done you wrong. If this helps, then good. Do I leave now, or is tomorrow soon enough?"

"Oh, no, sir! You do not leave. You are *simpático,* one nice fellow. So, we give you one share, like everybody else. And you don't do no work. You ride the horse, you say damn-damn like before, you don't do nothing, we like you."

"That's mighty good," Barstow said, and picked up a six-weeks-old Frisco paper. "That's exactly the way they do it back in the States, except the boss doesn't even get one share and they don't let him ride a horse, and they'd all go on strike if he said damn-damn or tried to run the show. This is just like home, and I'm going to like it."

Miguel bowed. "We kiss your hands, sir. With permission, we go."

He gave them permission, and they left. Presently, the household staff returned, and set to work in the cook shack, behind the bungalow.

Later Barstow said to the "boy" who served his supper, "Jaime, you joined the Hukbalahaps?"

"Oh, yes, sir, everybody join."

"Where'd you get the ten pesos?"

Jaime's face glowed. "Sir, I don't never have ten pesos, but the man take one pesos money, I sign on the book to pay later, with a little bit of interest."

This had a familiar sound. Before he got through with the organizer, Jaime would have paid several hundred pesos in compound interest, without having reduced the original debt. Selling emancipation on the installment plan was old stuff to Barstow; and when, after eating, he looked out the window, he was not surprised to see guards armed with rifles. "That's old stuff, too," he told himself. "The wealth sharers know they haven't brains or guts enough to run a plantation, and they know who has."

He had no more curiosity about Weyler. He was ready to bet any reasonable sum that Weyler was organizing some other plantation. . . .

COGON grass, with stalks the thickness of Barstow's little finger, and two yards high, surrounded the plantation. The knife-sharp blades of cogon reached to the river, and to the jungle which began at the foot of the mountains, ten miles to the northeast. High over all this towered Apo's ten thousand foot peak, sharp and white-capped. While the highway and Kabakan Town were only a few miles from the plantation, Barstow was securely imprisoned as though in jail. As a guerrilla, he had been able to prowl most of inner Mindanao only because of native allies. Now he had none, since even his one-time comrades were drunk on wealth-sharing.

So Barstow made his rounds. Two men went with him: Miguel, the spokesman of the newly formed chapter of Hukbalahaps, and Ceferino Carag, who had come from Kabakan Town.

Carag, Barstow quickly learned, was an idealist, an intellectual who was throwing in with the oppressed *tao*. He wore silver-rimmed glasses, and store clothes, still sufficiently intact to prove that he was a gentleman. Carag's presence warned Barstow that flight could not pay, since Kabakan Town was against the foreign landlord.

"*Señor*," the pleasant little man said, "I am happy that you accept this with good grace. Sometimes it is not so well received."

Barstow chuckled amiably. "Majority rules. Now that independence has come to the Islands, and everybody is all out for democracy, I can't squawk. After all, we Americanos brought it here."

Carag's deepset eyes brightened. His thin, sensitive face glowed with enthusiasm. "You see this is justice! Everyone shares. Heretofore, the *tao*, the proletariat, the working classes, they produce, they get nothing, nothing but debt, nothing but oppression. Begging your pardon, and with no offense desired, it is not right that you own all these many acres. To whom do they belong? To the people. Manifestly, sir, you did not create the land, it is for all."

"That is food for thought, Don Ceferino," Barstow gravely answered, since there seemed no use in telling the enthusiast that the people hadn't created the land either; and that they'd never have cleared a square yard of it had he not paid them to do so.

His prudence, however, was entirely wasted, for the intellectual continued, "It is true, you brought money into this country, and you hired labor. Which is wrong—that you could have such money clearly proves that you took profits you should have shared with others. No one man could honestly accumulate to buy all these acres, or hire so many men."

"That is an interesting idea, Don Ceferino. You are a scholar."

Carag wiped his spectacle lenses, and bowed, and smiled appreciatively. "In a small way, in a small way, sir, I am trained as an attorney. But I have renounced that, for as a class, the *abogado* is the tool of the landlords. For years, I waited this day. Finally, with 80,000 Hukbalahaps in Luzon setting the example—how could I help but devote myself to the cause?"

This went on and on. Carag didn't believe in private property. He did believe in the Common Man. Whoever had the organizing ability and talent which he admitted were necessary to keep a plantation going should be socially minded and share his superior gifts.

"As I share mine, the years of education and training," he said, by way of summing up before taking a breather.

But he didn't pause for breath often, and when he had finished his thesis, he started over again. Before the first day was ended, Barstow knew that the Chinese water torture would have been luxury.

Arguing with Carag was hopeless. Agreeing with the fanatic wouldn't silence him.

That evening, at the bungalow, Barstow ate with Carag, Miguel, and other key men of the revolt. There was Spam, and rice, eggplant and camotes, all swimming in a sauce of small, very red and very hot peppers from the *kampong* gardens; it was like swallowing a blast furnace. This was spiced with Agrarian Unrest, the Rights of Man, the Class War. Being robbed of a plantation wasn't bad. The rub came from having to hear ideology.

"Human rights," Carag chattered, "must take precedence over property rights."

"Must have cost a lot for you to become a lawyer," Barstow said, with feigned innocence and obtuseness. "How'd you do it, win the capital prize in the lottery?"

"There was income from my father's estate.

You see, as long as it lasted, I prepared myself for serving the Cause. Now I am exactly like these others."

Barstow didn't know whether to kick the earnest little man, or to feel sorry for him. He did neither because he was too busy thinking of an entire day devoted to watching his plantation go to hell under the hands of its new owners. The sights and sounds came back: "This infected tree, chop it down now? Jesus, Mary, and Joseph! Do that tomorrow—it profits us more today to get all the crude we can."

The tappers, already counting the millions of pesos they'd divide among them when the crude was sold, slashed fiercely. But not all were enthusiasts: there was the half which figured that since Barstow was no longer eating the wealth which had always rightly been theirs, it was not necessary to slave from dawn till dusk. "You see how it is," these explained. "Without disrespect to your excellency's presence, a few hours a day is enough for each to earn all that he needs. Is that not right, Don Ceferino?"

Ceferino Carag regarded them benignantly for echoing what he had so long pondered in silence.

ONE thing made Barstow uneasy: when constabulary came up the river, or down Highway One, to look into the burning of landlords' houses, or the boloing of especially obnoxious landlords, he would be used as a hostage, which wouldn't trouble the constabulary riflemen a bit, particularly not if Moro companies were sent to discipline the Visayan Christians of this republic within a republic.

Meanwhile, the Huks were speaking cheerily of an army they were organizing somewhere in Bukidnon, in the great cogon-covered cattle country of the interior.

When the proceeds from the new order's first shipment of crude rubber came from Cotabato, Barstow lined up with the others who were to share the wealth. Ceferino Carag, the most highly educated person present, computed the per capita earning, and declared the dividend. The cash ration was beyond any *tao's* wildest fancies, except when he dreamed of winning the capital prize of a lottery.

Hearing what each employee was to receive produced a double effect; and it was plain from every face that exultation was mixed with resentment whose cause was clear even before Barstow heard one man mutter, "This is what we should've been getting all the time. Look at how that son of an old goat's been robbing us!"

Barstow edged up to Carag's table and said, "Don Ceferino, one word before you start paying off."

"With pleasure, sir," the idealist said. "Gentlemen, our comrade has something to tell us."

Barstow told them as well as Carag, "The money on the table isn't all profit. You've got to hold out enough for more arsenic and sulphur to kill white ants. You've got to allow for planting trees to take the place of those we chopped down. We need more gas for the Fairbanks-Morse, and some for the jeep. Tools have been lost. And the engine's wearing out."

"Man, that's crazy!" someone retorted. "Where'd we buy an engine anyway?" Another chipped in, "We've still got enough arsenic. And we can get sulphur for nothing at Mt. Apo." And there was talk of amateur smiths making new tools, new knives, tapping cups, and whatever other expendables required replacement.

Carag nodded approvingly. "You see? The logic of the people. We pool our efforts. Here is your share, take yours first."

Barstow took the wad of bills, peeled off an amount based on a hasty estimate. "Keep this, Don Ceferino." He waggled the bit which he retained. "This is all that's profit, and I forgot to take out the taxes."

"Ha! But you forget, we pay no taxes any more."

"Nice if you can arrange it," he countered, but not derisively, for the 80,000 Huks up in Luzon were getting away with just that.

Then Don Ceferino and the others learned that they had jumped at conclusions. Four men rode up: three natives, and Ross Weyler. The timing of their arrival was so nice that Barstow knew that they had been keeping in touch ever since the sale of the crude rubber.

Weyler said, as he gestured toward the dish-faced man at his right, "Before you pay off, better listen to José Puyat. He comes from headquarters to collect dues."

"We paid you dues!" several retorted, indignantly. "How often does this happen?"

"Tell them, José."

Puyat booted his pony forward half a length. He was pudgy. His neck billowed over his shirt collar. His eyes peered sharply from a round face which made Barstow think of a well-fed Chinese trader. Puyat gleamed greasily, and his voice was greasy, yet there was nothing soft about the man except his form and surface.

"It is this way, comrades. We are organizing a militia to defend our rights. Then, we have to bribe senators, and a few constabulary officers. For the time, you understand. These things cost money. It also cost us—" his gesture indicated the field representative who had come with him, "a good deal to travel about, organizing other plantations. Clearly, you can't last long unless everyone is organized. You see —" he smiled persuasively, "Don Ceferino agrees. He was absent-minded. Or, did you take out dues before you called your comrades together?"

"Señor Puyat," Don Ceferino admitted, "is right, of course. It was an oversight. But, only ten pesos a head, gentlemen. A trifle, no?"

WHAT convinced them was the four who sat their ponies; arms folded, eyes over the heads of the *taos*, the four thought as one. Being on horse, they personified authority. That they were armed with .45 caliber automatics had the force of a symbol rather than of a threat. And, since they spoke with confidence, their hearers believed and accepted, just as they always had. . .

Barstow spat and walked up to Weyler. "You slick son of a———! Here's mine."

Weyler smiled amiably. "Don't be that way, Pete. Hand it to José, I'm not the treasurer."

Barstow gave Puyat a ten-peso note. The others followed his lead. They felt better about it, seeing that their one-time boss had knuckled down so gracefully.

Having paid his tribute, Barstow went back to the bungalow to wait for the guests who would share the place with him that night. He was glad that they had come. Self-assured, they would not keep close watch over their horses or pistols.

But however much Barstow pondered the possibility of escape, he was nevertheless open-minded as to the desirability of leaving. He had no qualms against quitting under fire. Running, to return and fight when the odds were better, was an old story to him. His only doubt came from wondering whether it would be better to stay, waiting for Share The Wealth to blow up from its own idiocy, and before the plantation became a total ruin; or to leave and so hasten the end, though inevitably with greater damage to soil and trees and equipment.

The decision was far from easy. He acknowledged its impossibility on any basis other than of guessing. But he now saw a good deal of merit in the general's proposal that he, Barstow, get to the heart of the Hukbalahap business to learn how firmly it was dug in.

It simmered down to this: that his decision depended on whether or not his finding out what held the Huks together would give him a weapon against Weyler and Puyat, and the means of discrediting Carag who, being sincere, was the most dangerous of all.

"Two crooks plus a fool," was the way Barstow summed it up. "And what's the best way of catching them with their pants down?"

Then Weyler and his aides came in. They didn't bother to knock. They gave Barstow no chance to offer whiskey and smokes.

Puyat's Shantung coat bulged from dues. The shiny cloth mirrored enough lamplight to show the shape of the wadded pesos. Outside, Ceferino Carag was trying to convince his comrades that gambling on a cockfight was not the way to benefit from shared wealth; but there had to be cockfights, so that each *tao* could win from his neighbor what Puyat had collected in tribute. Weyler hitched up a chair, and reached for a glass. The three Filipinos remained standing, though not out of deference to their host. They stood because they were in command: pie-faced Puyat, beetle-browed Visarra, and Montano, who was broad as he was long, and rugged as though he were hewn from a block of molave.

Puyat reeked with perfume. From his breast pocket a purple-bordered silk handkerchief peeped coquettishly. He buffed beautifully manicured and enameled nails against the palm of his left hand, and he smiled to himself. While that wad of currency did spoil the drape of his new coat, it made him happy.

"He's spending the take already," flashed into Barstow's mind. "Nobody shares any pesos that greasy thief ever gets his fingers on. Wonder how many gals he's got on that so-called brain of his?"

The more he saw of Puyat, the more it seemed that patience and snooping offered him a chance of getting these thieves to fall out sooner or later.

Then Weyler's opener made it clear that immediate problems existed. He dug into his pocket and said, "Sign this indenture, Pete, and make it honest-to-God sharing."

The document was a printed legal form whose text was in both Spanish and English. Barstow glanced at the heading, then said, "Nothing for me to do but convey the plantation to a trustee to hold in the names of the boys who're sharing the profits?"

Weyler nodded. "That's it."

"You know I only own forty acres, the rest is leased for twenty-five years."

"All right, assign the lease."

"Don't be funny! Sharing the gate receipts isn't bad, but giving away trees, equipment, the whole works—are you nuts?"

"He thinks we're nuts," Weyler said to his three aides.

Puyat, Visarra, and Montano smiled. Puyat said, "That's what pig-lover at Malaybalay thought," and laughed unpleasantly.

Weyler spread the paper on the table and offered Barstow a pen. "Maybe you don't know how rough they got with that chap in Malaybalay. Don't be a chump. Sign over. After all, you're getting your divvy and if you manage things right, you won't do a bit bad."

"Go to hell!" Barstow answered.

"That," said Puyat, "is an unfortunate attitude, and it wastes our time. We are all busy, still, we have all night to talk."

Weyler stepped back and said to his men, "Get to work!" He pulled his gun. "If the stubborn bastard don't want to listen, he can try feeling for a while."

CHAPTER III

THE YELLOW PARASOL

RATTAN withes, applied wet, bound Barstow to his iron bedstead. As they dried, becoming wiry hard, they bit into wrists and ankles, for he shed neither blood nor sweat enough to loosen the jungle fibres. Pain bit also from within, sometimes creeping, again racing through his legs and up his back and up his arms, always centering in his brain; but for a long time now, being out of his head had given him partial immunity, so that all these things seemed to happen to another man.

Mosquitoes buzzing joined the tremendous whir in his brain. The gecko on the other side of the ceiling uttered his obscene mockery. Barstow thought it was funny. He echoed the cry, deriding both gecko and the men who crouched about him, sweating in the heat and kerosene reek of the lamp bracketed to the wall.

There were lots of men, different men, most of them brown; but two were white. . . No, one was white . . . only one white man, Weyler. And Weyler smiled at Barstow's derision, even when Barstow found the gecko's human-sounding cry not strong enough, so that he cursed, abused, challenged them in Tagalog and Maguindanao and Chinese, and heaped them with Spanish which had never flamed from any book. . . He saw, during moments when his eyes would focus, and there was some sense in his fever-fired brain that laughter hit the hardest. Sometimes Weyler winced when that mad laughter shook the room, and made the obscene gecko subside in futility. Sometimes Weyler's face tightened, and his color changed, and he almost arose from his expectant crouch beside the iron bedstead to which they had lashed Barstow.

"You can't hold out," Weyler finally said, successfully winning toward calmness. "Sign, and get it over. You know you can't fight it. We've got more time than you have. When I'm tired, there's someone to take my place. *And we've just started, Barstow.* We've not really lifted a hand."

Barstow's mouth was baked black from fever, but he contrived to spit. Then he went black, but he did not quite leave the room. He was standing beside his lashed self, though not very far from it. Getting out of that tortured body was a relief. Funny, he told himself, I used to hear people speak about beating hot weather, they said they'd get out of their skin and sit around in their bones. I can beat them, I've got out of the bones and. . .

It was chilly. . . chilly and dark and he didn't know the way back into the body he now needed for warmth. Maybe they'd refrigerated him. He heard the castanet click of teeth, he heard the jiggle and jitter and creak of the bedstead and the ancient springs. Nothing short of an earthquake could start things shuddering so hard.

"Shake fast enough and the exercise makes you warm. . . give me some blankets, you bastards, get me a fire, set the house afire, I won't sign, I'll have your hides, I'll bury you to your chins in an ant hill, I'll feed your hearts to the pigs, you pig-lovers. . . a pig'll eat a pig any day. . ."

When he knew that they were ignoring him again, he sneaked into his body, and since they did not know what he had done, they were careless in their speech. They spoke of things which did not concern him. They chuckled wisely, and they planned. He could not follow their plans or make any special sense of them but words and names came clearly through the roaring and the crackling and buzzing.

Burning, then freezing, then burning again. . . be a joke if I walked out and didn't ever come back. . .

Blankets and whiskey. Atabrine-yellowed eyes and atabrine-yellowed face. "Hello, you pig———!" Barstow said, trying to make his wooden lips flexible enough for his speech to be understood.

Weyler understood all right, but Weyler merely sighed and answered, "You can't beat us. You can stand so much. You're lucky I'm here, or you'd get worse."

Barstow had met some odd things during his absences from his body. "Take it as long as you can; if you knuckle down too quickly, they'll be suspicious. . . don't be a chump of a white man, play it like a Chinaman, remember what Lin Yu Tang said about pretending you're a fool?" They'd said a lot of other things, those presences in the flame and in the frost and the darkness, and this seemed to be the time. So Barstow said, thickly, "O.K., if I can move my wrist, I'll sign."

THERE wasn't enough of him left to tie, so they released his ankles and his wrists. Weyler helped him sit up. Barstow moved. The sweat-soaked mattress made soggy sounds, as when boots sink deep into a swamp. He took the pen and signed the indenture, which already bore the signatures of witnesses, and the seal of the witnessing notary.

Weyler nodded, then handed Barstow a big brown bottle of atabrine tablets. "Told you I'd give you your medicine as soon as you listened to reason," he said, heartily. "Well, good luck. I brought you some stuff that'll get you on your feet in no time."

Barstow lunged for Weyler's pistol. That was what he had been planning to do all the time: grab the gun, get the drop on them, blast a few

just on general principles, and then make for the horses; the restless horses he had from time to time smelled, during the malaria fever and malaria chills which had whipped him into line without Weyler's having to exert himself. Barstow lunged, but toppled over, and into blackness.

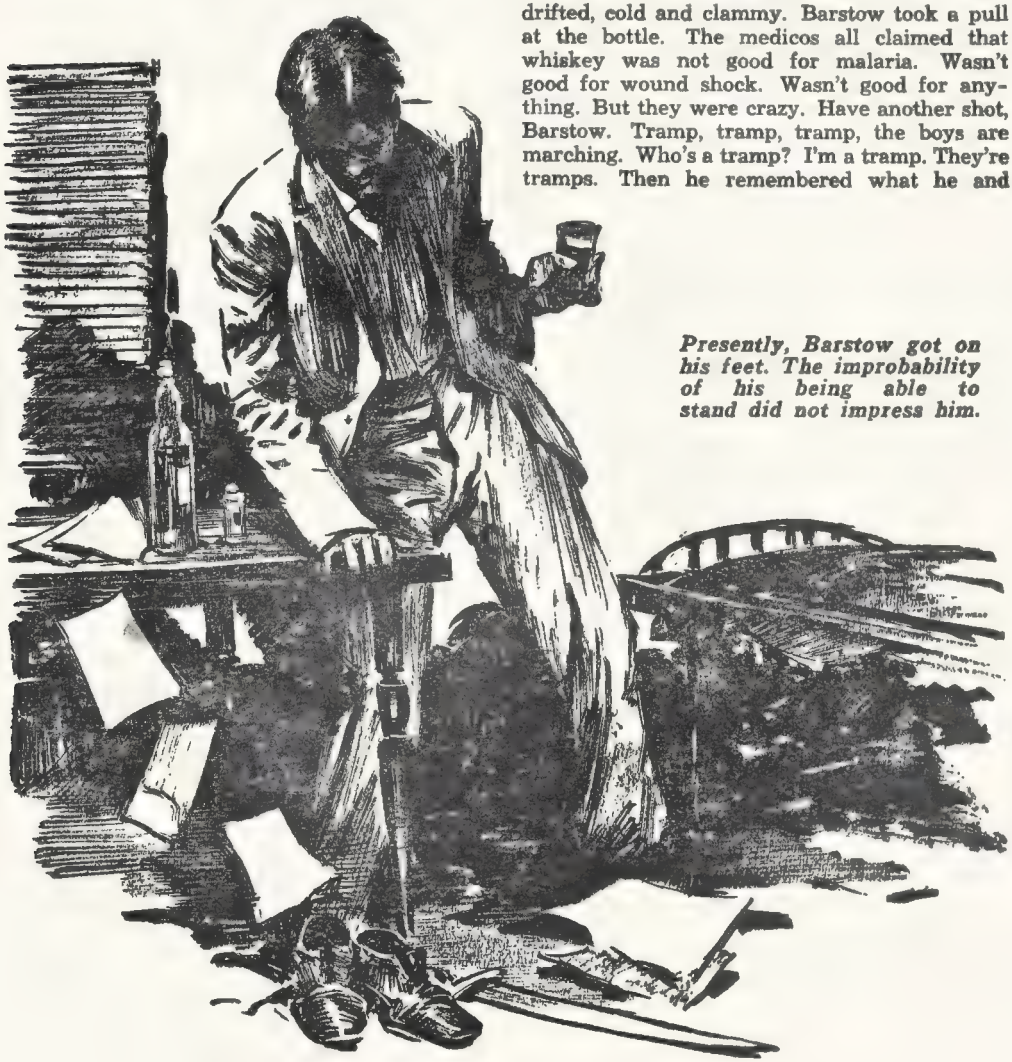
He folded so suddenly that none of the patient tormentors sensed that he had tried to strike back. He was happy for a moment in the cunning whereby he had fooled them. He was alone, and unbound. Men mounted up, and rode away. Presently, Barstow got on his feet. The improbability of his being able to stand, after a fashion, did not impress him. He blew out the lamp, and went to the verandah.

There was no longer any sound of horses. Barstow grinned. "Muffled hoofs, huh? Think I can't follow, huh?" But instead of laughing aloud, he wagged his head—he'd been a sap, thinking Weyler helpless from malarial fever; now Weyler had considered him helpless from the same.

"They're going to record that indenture. That's what they think. . ."

He got his shoes and a household bolo. He got the remaining atabrine tablets, the three fingers of whiskey in the bottle. He stuffed some camotes into his pockets, and some matches. This was so much like running out ahead of the Japs that his feverish brain accepted it as logical. Devil take this rubber business, this grubbing of pesos. Hunt a few men instead. They'd hunted him, now he'd hunt them. Went in cycles, just like malaria: first fire, then frost; first delirium, then logic.

Far off, a crocodile bellowed. River mists drifted, cold and clammy. Barstow took a pull at the bottle. The medicos all claimed that whiskey was not good for malaria. Wasn't good for wound shock. Wasn't good for anything. But they were crazy. Have another shot, Barstow. Tramp, tramp, tramp, the boys are marching. Who's a tramp? I'm a tramp. They're tramps. Then he remembered what he and



Presently, Barstow got on his feet. The improbability of his being able to stand did not impress him.

the gecko had been saying. Just fits the situation, and he began shouting it. He was far enough from the plantation for no one to hear.

When he got tired of the gecko, it was time to sing. The general said song kept up the morale. "General, ever hear the one about Christopher Columbo. . ." Foolish quip, the old buzzard had heard every song ever sung by a buck private. "Have a drink, General . . haw! Laugh's on you, she's dry as a powder horn. . ."

He heaved the bottle. It splashed in a drainage ditch.

"Oh, I got six months to do this one
I've got six months to get this done,
I've got six months to do this one
And I don't give a damn if I never
get done. . ta-raaa—ta-raaa. . ."

He liked his mimicry of twenty-four regimental buglers sounding off the "Rogues' March." No, only one bugler sounded the call which brought jailbirds from the guardhouse to pick up papers and cigar butts by way of six months at hard labor. . . That's all right, General, sing another one. . .

"You're in the Army now
You're not behind the plow,
You'll never get rich you son of a ———"

"Pretty good, Barstow," the general said. "Forty years of it and I'm not rich. Now the one about the Huks as they go hukking along . . . Yeah, the tune's like the caisson song, only it's about the Huks—"

"Share the wealth, my——! Share the brains and guts, General!"

"You're out of date, Pete—where have they got brains and guts to share? They haven't got brains or guts to spare."

"Hell's fire, when'd you learn to speak poetry?"

It was getting to be a good march. The lean old buzzard was good company. And all the Huks went hukking along. . .

TOWARD sunset, Barstow knew that for nearly a day, he had been dodging pursuit. This did not surprise him, for he remembered from old times how a man can run and fight, stalk and strike back, in fever delirium, or during hours of sleep-walking; how ordinary consciousness can be displaced by senses and abilities which lie dormant as long as a man has health, food, and rest. Many hunted Americans had died from not knowing that a final thrust of blind will can crack the wall which keeps one unaware of hidden powers.

So, as he scanned the back trail, and watched the cogon grass moving, here and there, contrary to the way the wind should sway it, he had only a moment of bewilderment. He learned from the shade of sky redness, and from the smell of air and grass, that this was sunset and not sunrise; his knowledge was then confirmed by a glimpse of Apo's towering white peak, the one point of orientation which he could trust.

He looked at his bolo, and shook his head. "Haven't sliced anyone so far. . ." Thinking of Weyler, he was sorry. "Split him lengthwise and let the pigs wrassle his guts. . . "

Though Barstow couldn't see himself, he knew how he looked. He remembered guerrilla comrades, some of whom had survived.

Grass moving the wrong way. Bunglers on the job. The jungle was near. He didn't know, and he didn't care where the road was. This lucid interval might not last long. Maybe he couldn't resume his trance-march. The trick had its limits. There were times when one went into a total stupor, wholly at the mercy of whatever came by. Such a blank called for a foolproof hideout.

The elevation of a knoll helped him. It was important to watch the motion of the tall cogon below him. They came nearer. He could smell *dobe* cigarete smoke. He heard muted voices. Barstow grinned craftily. They didn't know how near they were. He wished he had a machine gun. Then he was glad he didn't, because habit would drive him, and these were, after all, his own men turned against him by a schemer. Still, they were dangerous from being afraid of what he could do if he made good his flight.

An unnatural sharpening of vision warned him that everything would presently go blank —but he made use of the moment by recognizing an outstanding bungler, one who wore glasses. Ceferino Carag. The face was too far away, but the posture showed how the man suffered in his leadership of the pursuit. The grass became shorter; it had been high as a horse's ears. Barstow fingered the stalks, gauged the wind, and the distance to the jungle.

He cut a fist-filling bundle, and struck a match. There had not been any rain for an entire day. There wasn't an impressive wind, yet it sufficed. The thick stalks crackled and popped. Barstow retreated and moved to his left, where he applied his torch again.

He could no longer see the trackers, but it was a sure bet that they were craning their necks, and getting ready to go into a huddle, being novices led by a lawyer. Novices, except for Andrés and Pacífico. Remembering them alarmed Barstow. He raced along a contour, and fired grass well to the right of his original lookout spot.

The draw between two knolls gave a good draught, pulling the fire out like the horn of a

crescent. Above the pop-pop-smack of stalks he caught the yells of the pursuers. They weren't in real danger, yet they had something to think about. A pig squealed wrathfully and a tiny deer, venturing curiously from the jungle, jumped straight up, to bolt for cover. There'd be other animals alarmed by smoke and flame. Some would confuse the men in the grass.

Barstow made for a gully washed out by the rains. His alertness was dulling. For seconds at a time, he went blank. He could judge the length of these intervals only by looking back to see how much ground he had gained, and how far the fire had spread.

"Huh! Didn't paint myself into a corner," he said, as he noted that the wind was driving the flame in the right direction. "Hope they get their tails scorched."

The jungle was at hand. Swing from liana to liana to break the trail. . . take to a tree, tie yourself so you won't drop when you dope-off . . . nice, if you can hoist yourself. . .race against time. . .no, against fever. . .no, it'll be a chill. . . anyway, it'll be something. Whatever it was going to be, he had to be hidden. He couldn't play hide and seek any longer. He'd used his reserve of trance-walking ability.

It was not until he committed himself to an all-out dash for the jungle's fringe that he saw the two men between him and his goal. They crouched. He no more than sensed their shape and color, and that they'd circled around to cut him off—two who were not novices. Barstow wheeled. He shouted ferociously and charged with his bolo. While his change of direction was trifling, it was so sudden that it had the effect of a spear leveled without warning. They yelled and separated. He couldn't get both. Then he knew he could not get either. His charge, at the last instant losing its goal, upset him. He slashed air, and brush, then roots and dirt as he rolled.

Barstow had overestimated his agility and timing. Things began to happen as in a slow-motion film. The two were deliberate in turning and closing back upon him. They were armed, but they used bare hands.

"My friends," he croaked bitterly, as he recognized Andrés and Pacífico.

"Shut up!" the pock-marked Andrés snarled.

Pacífico smacked him down with a pistol barrel, ending the debate. Then he and Andrés set to work lashing Barstow to a length of bamboo. Barstow didn't object; the quick-acting sedative had done a solid job.

THE alternations of darkness and light which followed were in a dimension in which time had no place. Barstow knew that his former comrades had gagged him, and that they were carrying him as a bale of merchandise. He could never be sure but that they had told him the destination and purpose, or that he had overheard, but since reality had taken flight from within him, nothing outside of Barstow had logic. Time, someone had once told him, was a mode of perception; so, since everything he perceived was warped out of relation to everything else, time could not exist, and did not. Or, he told himself during moments when reason invaded the vacuum and stayed for a short flicker, since time isn't working, I don't really perceive a thing. Be fun, having half a dozen philosophers try this business, instead of sitting on their behinds talking about it. They've been nowhere, and I have.

He ended by accepting the illogicalness of not having been taken back to his plantation, and of not having had his throat cut.

"Simple," he argued. "Sensible thing would be to blot me out so I couldn't squawk . . . but with nothing sensible, I am not blotted out."

With sequence not existing, "later" had no meaning to Barstow; though in terms of sunrise and sunset, the event which dazed him did come after his capture. But what he eventually saw made all preceding sights and sounds commonplace. He himself was upright, well above the earth, yet a good distance short of the sky. He looked across a river, and he was comforted rather than dismayed when he had to conclude, "This is it. I am crazy, and it doesn't hurt."

A barge shoved off from the farther shore. It was manned by muscular pagans who wore cocked hats and gee-strings—every man an admiral. The commander of the craft, the one with five stars on his shoulders, carried two beer bottles, taped together to simulate binoculars. These he raised to his eyes; and as he peered at Barstow, he shouted in salty tones, "Forty fathoms and no bottom! Hard a-port, you sons of Satan! All hands on deck!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" the other admirals bellowed, and bent to the bamboo poles which propelled the barge.

Amidships stood a tall man, taller than any Moro Barstow had ever seen. He wore an open-top turban. This, and military erectness, and folded arms, increased the illusion of height. Behind him stood a bearer who carried the symbol of Malay royalty, a yellow parasol with gilt fringe.

"Who said *I'm* crazy?" Barstow asked himself. "That guy thinks he's a sultan. . .that guy, with that Irish face!"

He tried to tread air, the way he'd been doing for several lifetimes, but he'd lost the trick. Bit by bit, Barstow felt the biting bonds which secured him to a bamboo pole propped against the trunk of a girdled tree. Something like being crucified without having been spread-eagled.

The hatchet-faced sultan was neither Malay

Traffic cops, with stars painted on their bare chests, leaned against lamp posts and twirled their clubs.

nor half-breed; a white man, beyond any doubt, a fact which made returning reality no treat at all to Barstow.

Behind the sultan stood four shapely native girls. Each wore a gleaming tiara, a scarlet silk formal, and high-heeled red slippers. Four dark queens; the way they languidly plied their jeweled fans left Barstow no doubt at all as to their status. "King Arthur, Mindanao style," he concluded, but decided that this was no time to look amused.

Then Barstow wished he could run, and keep running. That was when the Stars and Stripes rose to the mast, and eight "boys," mother-naked except for cocked hats, lined up to pipe the side. A juke box blared *The Star Spangled Banner*. The sultan's hand snapped to a salute such as the Army had not seen since pre-war days.

The barge crunched against the bamboo pier. Above the martial blare, the twittering of pipes, the shouts of the admirals, came the voice of the sultan, "Get down off of there, or put on a crown of thorns and do it right!"

A servant handed him a canteen. He took a swig, and gave Barstow a gulp of nipa gin. "I'm Datu Eric Ryan. These ladies are my wives."

"How do you do, Your Highness?" Barstow answered, bowing formally as is possible to a man lashed to a bamboo rod. Then, to each dark beauty in turn, "Charmed, Your Grace."

Barstow became painfully sane. He wished that Datu Ryan were that way. The tall "prince" was dead drunk, dangerously drunk because he carried his liquor and himself so well: that meat-axe face, those bitter gray eyes which mirrored the ferocity of his smile, that burlesque of royal pomp and military ceremony made Barstow regret having come out of malaria delirium.

Beyond the sluggish stream, traffic cops wearing archaic coal-scuttle helmets, gee-strings, and stars painted on their bare chests, leaned against lamp posts and twirled their clubs. Whistles *tweet-tweeted* as a carabao cart lumbered past the front of what undoubtedly was the imperial palace. One of the Mindanao "Clancys" bawled, "Where the hell you think you're going, Mac?"

Barstow could take just so much. He laughed shrilly, and said, "Your Highness, can you spare me a dime's worth of opium?"

Datu Ryan laughed savagely, and shouted a command. . .

BARSTOW, lying in a hammock, was becoming accustomed to not having been flayed alive, or impaled on a bamboo stake. He grimaced and said, "You drink it."

Datu Ryan shouted, "Drink it, or I'll wring your neck!"

Barstow, humoring him, found that the beer stein did not contain gin. If there had ever been a more bitter drink, he'd not heard of it. He let out a choked yell and tried to get to his feet. The remorseless *datu* caught him by the throat. "Down it, or—or—I'll bust you in pieces! It's good for you."

"Strych—"

"Strychnine, my eye! It's cinchona, I make it myself, cook the bark, he-man's quinine, none of this pansy sulphate stuff."

Barstow shuddered it down. When he quit grimacing enough to speak, he asked, "Plantation of it?"

"Experimental, that's all. I grow copra."

"Thought I smelled it. Say—" He eyed the *datu* sharply. "How do you do it?"

"Do what?"

"Keep from sharing the wealth. Hukbalahaps—"

Ryan howled with laughter. He gestured, and the four queens, who had silently stepped into the shadows of the verandah, came nearer. One held out a box of cigars. The second selected a smoke nearly a foot long. She offered it to the third, who bit off the tip. The fourth took it, flicked a lighter, and after a few puffs, daintily put the cigar into Datu Ryan's mouth. Then, like a well-trained ballet, the quartet stepped back, to resume flicking their jeweled fans.

"Begin to catch on?" Ryan demanded. "I'm the son-in-law of four separate and distinct *datus* and I live the part. My people like it. So Weyler put the skids under you?"

"How'd you know?"

Ryan dismissed the question with a wave of the hand. "He was here. I overheard enough of the opening quips to get wise to his notions. Hell, no, he couldn't ever have organized my people. They like things the way I run them, but as a matter of principle, I stripped the son of a ——— to the buff, whipped him within an inch of his life, dressed him in woman's clothes, and ran him into the jungle. You get it, he lost face, he'd been made ridiculous."

"He wasn't wearing skirts when I found him."

"If he wore pants, he stole 'em."

Barstow's eyes were goggling. He didn't know what to say. Ryan went on, "You're beginning to figure maybe I am not loco!"

Barstow gulped and choked. "Uh—um—what I mean is—you're *General* Ryan, aren't you? The man who used to go down into Davao and hang Jap hemp planters with their own hemp?"

"I have a sense of humor sometimes," Ryan admitted, modestly. "But what fooled you was—"

"That you weren't wearing four stars, a Sam Browne, cordovan boots, and all the rest of the pre-war military stuff. And I was a bit foggy when you found me."

Ryan shrugged. "Not long after the landing in Leyte when every guerrilla was being commissioned in the A.U.S., be-jeezus if they didn't offer me a captaincy. Me, a *captain*! So I told 'em where to shove their bars, and I swore I'd never wear another uniform, and I'm a man of my word."

"Hey, how'd you know about me—"

"Your two men told me. Andrés and Pacífico."

"Where—"

"They hid out till they saw how I'd act when I saw you. You looked pretty bad, and they figured I might blow my top and blame them. Actually, they grabbed you and lit out, to keep that ideological nit-wit of a Carag from nailing you, and they had a race of it. This was their best bet. Nothing even smelling like a Huk will come within twenty miles of the plantation. How you feel?"

"Pretty good, can't understand it."

"You've been in a dope, but eating helped, also taking quinine."

Barstow got to his feet carefully.

"I feel plenty better. And with my two buddies sticking with me, that redoubles it, king size."

"So you're going to find Weyler and get that indenture?"

"If he hasn't recorded it. And he might not have. Look here, Ryan, you stalled them off once, but your luck mightn't hold. Why not us team up, you seem to have a private army and a personal navy, though turning it out to pick me up still has me guessing."

"Morale builder, that's what. You can't regiment a Malay, but he loves ceremony and the visible sign of power. This is democracy with a Malay flavor, and how long would I last if they didn't like it? You tried a cross between the American style and Uncle Joe's, you see what happened? Everyone but your two best buddies crapped on you, that's what happened."

"Look, *datu*—" Barstow used the term seriously. "You can help me and help yourself too by giving me a hand."

"Only I won't. Live and let live. As long as the Huks lay off me, they can bust themselves. I'm sorry about you, but that is none of my business."

"That," Barstow said, bitterly, "is what I told the general, back in Parang. This is your business, *datu*."

Ryan snorted. "He's the buzzard who signed that captain's commission. Listen, Mac, you were born alone, you'll die alone. You lost your plantation alone, and who do you think I am to upset the rules by staking you to an army? Talk to your two trusties, and don't spare the quinine."

The *datu* got up. His parasol bearer followed him, and then the four dark queens.

CHAPTER IV

THE DREGS OF WAR

THE Central Mindanao plateau was rolling cattle country without cattle, for the Japs had rounded up and slaughtered all the herds which once had ranged the high plains of Bukidnon Province; they had taken most of the horses, and had left few carabaos. However, the abacá planters were making the most of their chance, since the Davao district was wholly disorganized, with the city a total ruin, worse even than Manila, and the hinterland still swarming with Jap snipers.

Barstow, Andrés, and Pacífico readily found work on one of the abacá plantations taken over by the Huks. Each had signed a chit for ten pesos; each had a membership card entitling him to trudge up and down the long rows, cutting the stalks, which were from ten to fifteen feet high. The abacá reminded Barstow of banana and the plantain; it bore green, banana-shaped fruit, woody and full of black seeds. Abacá fiber was "Manila" hemp, which made the finest marine cordage, and the best hangman's nooses.

"That last is nice," Barstow observed, as he tramped along in the trace of a cart loaded with stalks bound for the stripping mill. "But having a chopper is the bright spot."

"Maybe we use it tonight," Pacífico said. "His number one boy says he's coming to town."

"With Puyat?"

"Maybe Weyler comes with Carag," Andrés answered. "There is more organizing, they tell me at the *jueteng* game last night. Over in Lanao."

Barstow made a hissing stroke with his machete. "We won't need choppers! He must be crazy, trying to organize Lanao Moros."

Andrés shrugged. "Is what I hear."

Santa Rosa was a barrio which had outgrown its pants. The original cluster of bamboo shacks on the bank of the Cagayan had spread upstream and down. Well back from the river were more imposing houses of wood. Still farther back was the Hukbalahap arsenal, camouflaged as part of an abacá processing plant. All along the approaches to the town were lean-tos of bamboo, in front of which squatted groups of abacá harvesters about their cooking fires. Some of these itinerants had brought their women with them; many had not.

"And that," Barstow told himself, "will keep the Huks so busy fighting each other they won't have any time to bushwhack the Military Police or the Civilian Guards."

Far to the east, he saw fire. He heard laborers speculating as to whose hacienda was aflame. Some insisted that it was Del Monte plantation headquarters. Others were equally positive that however big the blaze, it could not be seen from such a distance. The burning of landlords' property, whether personal or corporate, was taken for granted.

Presently, Barstow and his companions passed the machine guns emplaced at the approaches to Santa Rosa. Some were Japanese, others were American .50 caliber pieces which had found their way from battlefields of the past to liven up tomorrow's battles. And in the recently cleared plaza, platoons of Huks were drilling—still awkward on feet accustomed to plodding in the fields, but earnest of face, with a grimness accented by sunset's cross-lighting. They were proud of their rifles, proud to be part of the growing power which would eventually divide Mindanao among the poor and the oppressed.

"What kind of salute is that?" Andrés demanded, on seeing a gesture which was still novel.

"Isn't fascist, isn't Nazi," Barstow answered. "Just a fumbling imitation of something from a movie."

"Or from Weyler?" Pacífico suggested.

"Maybe from Carag," Barstow told him.

"Why Carag?"

"Because he learned more at school than he could digest. Mental constipation. Feed him some blue chip stocks, and I bet he'd get rid of his sympathy for the oppressed in a hurry."

Although "blue chip" required a good deal of explaining, Barstow made it clear enough to his companions before they'd scraped the last bit of maize and gravy from the bottom of their cooking pot. Then, being encamped alongside the road, Barstow was deflected from his dissertation on the psychology of idealists.

The men who plodded through the dusk were not in uniform; they wore shirts which flopped outside their knee-length pants. However, all carried rifles, and some were wounded. All looked tired. One fell out, to lie flat on the ground. The women they herded along the wagon trail which led in from the west were ready to collapse—most of them *guapas*, though several were middle-aged.

"No baskets on their heads," Andrés observed sagaciously.

Barstow frowned. "And they're going in front of the men."

Pacífico squinted through the brief dusk. "They are tied together with strings." Comprehension brightened his face. "You see, is not enough cooks for the camps, so they bring in women from the outside."

Barstow spat a jet of the betel nut which was part of his disguise as a half-breed Filipino. "They're bringing more than cooks, if you ask me!"

This brought an appreciative grin; Barstow went on, "Well, you're right, but what I meant

was, they've imported trouble—look at that one! The third one—"

"*Muy guapa!*" Andrés exclaimed, and Pacífico rolled his eyes.

BARSTOW agreed with both. The girl was now near enough to the fire for its glow to gild her smooth young face, and bring fiery glints from her dark eyes, though fire aplenty would have blazed from them in any light. Her walk and the carriage of her head were different from those of her companions in captivity. Her nostrils flared proudly. She wasn't afraid, merely furious, and already tasting someone's blood, anyone's blood, far in advance of the spilling. Despite the uncertain light, Barstow got the impression that her jacket and skirt were costly, and her bracelets gold, not Chinese traders' junk.

"Moro," he whispered. "Pretty as a pair of lace pants, but the lad who grabbed her will wish someone had chopped off both his hands."

Though the high-spirited girl could not have understood Barstow's comment, she sensed his intense interest. Her eyes shifted, and she said, in a clear, low voice, "No-good-American-son-of-a———"

She had passed on before Barstow got through gulping. He was thoroughly alarmed. Andrés said, "She did not mean you."

"Well, she didn't mean you or Pacífico."

"Maybe she see your eye and know you are one good fellow," came the explanation, "so she speak English to show she is a lady."

"The identification is too accurate," Barstow said, uneasily, "I don't like it."

"Maybe we find Weyler tonight and we leave quick, no?"

Since following the imported cooks did not come under the head of reclaiming a plantation, the three dismissed the outspoken *guapa*, and settled down to piecing together information they had picked up during their several days of cutting abacá. Though every so often, Andrés insisted that if being a Hukbalahap meant sharing the wealth, he knew pretty well which "cook" he'd take as first choice.

After the third digression, Barstow turned on him: "You forget that girl, you hear? Or I'll nick a machete across your thick head!"

Andrés grinned amiably. "Maybe if enough Huks start fighting for her, I can save the girl and the papers, no?"

"She'd make a nice present for Datu Ryan," Pacífico suggested.

Andrés objected, "That pig-lover! He won't help us."

"We'll help ourselves," Barstow told him; and within the hour, he was leading them toward Ross Weyler's new house which, despite the shortage of building material, was large and without any makeshifts of structure.

Bamboo and bananas grew about the house, solidly hedging it. Fireflies made bluish-white spots as they drifted against the darkness of foliage. The heavy sweetness of *dama de la noche* overpowered the scent of stables, and of the pickled fish which Weyler's servants managed to get, despite the scarcity of that pre-war delicacy. Through all these odors came the reek of durian, a blend as of turpentine, offal, and custard. Inside, a radio droned away. Though Barstow couldn't understand a word, the intonation suggested a news commentator.

He approached boldly from the side and edged through a narrow gap in the hedge. Weyler's servants would all be at a cockfight in the barrio. Distant yelling and hooting told that the spectators had no thought for anything but the duels and the bets they had placed.

In the gloom behind the bungalow, he reached out, nudging first Andrés and then Pacífico. When they returned the signal, each went his own way.

The house stood on piers six feet high, allowing free passage of air to reduce the effects of humidity on the main floor. The divergence from standard practice came from the lack of rubbish and offal under the house. This was somewhat due to Weyler's strictness, and somewhat because the floor, being solid planks rather than of bamboo slats, made the usual methods of refuse disposal impossible. Nevertheless, Barstow, picking his way toward the front, was on the lookout for pigs.

Above him, hard shoes made the floor reverberate. A chair scraped. Barstow paused here and there to touch the overhead boards with a hardwood cane. There were no vibrations to indicate that anyone other than Weyler was moving about.

Presently, he noted Pacífico's signal: the thrice-repeated flash of a vial in which fireflies had been caged. He had scarcely answered in like manner when Andrés identified himself, and joined them.

"He is alone," Andrés whispered. "The floor is solid, so I go in with bare feet to look. We can take him where he sits by the desk with papers and letters."

Barstow nodded. "That's good, but I still think it'd be better knocking at the door, then grabbing him when he answers. He's pacing around too much for us to sneak up on him."

They agreed, but as they went toward the front steps, the rattle of a *caromata* halted them. The scarcity of horse-drawn vehicles made it certain that an influential person was abroad, and probably bound for Weyler's house. After a moment, the cart swung into the drive. A man in white stepped down and said, "*Cochero*, you wait for me."

"But *señor*," the driver objected, "while you deal with the gentleman, I can see some of the fights."

He noted Pacifico's signal: the flash of a vial in which fireflies had been caged.

A good-humored chuckle. "See the fights and me waiting! Doubtless you will know when I want to leave?"

So saying, the visitor went up the steps to the verandah.

"Sounds like Puyat," Barstow whispered. "All right, nail the driver first but don't finish the poor devil, just lay him out. Then get Weyler at the door. Puyat's going to be easy."

However, the blaze of headlights checked his plan. The three prowlers stood against piers to avoid the glare which flooded the space beneath the house. Since the bridge over the drainage ditch in front was rickety, the chauffeur parked outside. Two men in white came up the walk. Three with submachine guns followed.

After greetings, Weyler asked the newcomers, "Where's Puyat?"

There was a perceptible pause before one answered, "Ah, *señor*, he asks me to present regrets—some unforeseen business—ah—an emergency, you understand."

Weyler laughed good-humoredly. "Some *guapa!* The fool can't get women off the brain. Come on in, gentlemen! I hope you had a good trip."

"Good, except for too many bullet holes in the car. Those Military Police and the Civilian Guard—there's going to be trouble."

Barstow got this much clearly before the visitors followed Weyler into the room. The rest became a mumble.

WHEN Barstow, followed by his two companions, crept into the bungalow from the rear, he picked up the thread of discussion in the living room. Weyler was saying, "I'm sorry, but I can't give you any cash on the plantations you've taken over."

"But Parral told me—" one of the visitors declared.

Weyler cut in, "Parral, you talked out of turn. Just because I did you one favor—look here, man! Making those transfers legal is not so easy. I've got half a dozen right here that I can't sell to any speculator, no matter how well he's fixed with the politicos!"

Parral's voice showed that he didn't like that a bit. He demanded, "Then why do we go out to make landlords sign over? Is it for our health?"

Weyler answered smoothly, "No, it is to keep up the morale of the *tao*, he'll pay his dues better if he thinks he's a legal part owner of a plantation. He'll join the army quicker to defend his rights."

"But you told us—"

"Of course, I told you! And when we're sure the owners can't kick up trouble, *then* we can begin to cash in on the properties. But you don't expect me to dig up money now and take my chances later?"

Parral muttered a begrudged assent, followed by a fresh protest. Weyler dismissed him airily, "Go and talk to Carag, he'll explain the legal twists of it all."

There was a sour laugh. Someone exclaimed, "Carag! That blockhead!"

Weyler went on, "All right, *compadres*. Until I can get around that chump of a Carag, to convince him that cashing in the plantations and dividing the money is better for the oppressed *tao* than holding it in trust—but figure it out for yourselves!"

As they wrangled back and forth, getting nowhere, it became ever more apparent to Barstow that Weyler and his aides were out to loot the peasants and tenant farmers they pretended to liberate; and that Carag, the idealist, was one of their stooges. Finally Weyler said, "We've got more to worry about than squeezing the last peso out of this business. You hear that?"

"Hear what?"

"Listen—"

They exclaimed, but not before Barstow caught the far-off, familiar sound of musketry, and the grumble of mortar shells.

"Not thunder, gentlemen," Weyler told them. "Someone's having trouble with the constabulary."

"You don't look worried."

"That's the army's worry, not mine," Weyler told them. "And thank you for calling. When there's anything to divide, I'll let you know."

They pretended to accept their dismissal in good grace because not doing so would have made them lose prestige. Barstow, crouching in the darkness of the hall, watched Weyler go with them to the front. As he went, he chatted amiably, all the while slapping his palm with a sheaf of papers: the indentures, Barstow guessed.

The *caromata* rattled away. The car beyond the hedge roared. Barstow nudged his companions. He wasted a moment repeating his instructions: "Take him alive."

Thinking of Datu Ryan's remarks and principles, Barstow had decided that the best way of undoing the organizer's work would be to take him to Kabakan to make a show of him. Returning with the man's head would not by any means be as effective as bringing him back alive, then exposing him and his tricks, with Andrés and Pacífico as witnesses. Since they had turned against their comrades to help a landlord, their testimony might fall flat, but for lack of anything better, Barstow counted on them.

He met Weyler face to face, and said from behind his gun, "We're taking those real estate papers. And you along with them."

Weyler didn't look as frightened as he should have, not even when he recognized the stained face beneath the straw hat. He lost a moment recovering from amazement, then he dropped the conveyances, and shrugged as he lifted his hands.

"Where are we going?" He nudged the documents with his toe. "You'll play hell getting far with me."

"If your boys really like you, they won't try to stop us."

Pacífico fingered the keen edge of his bolo; he'd given Barstow his pistol. Weyler, who understood sign language, wasn't interested in having his detached head rescued, so he proposed, "Since there are only three of you, we might make some kind of deal. After all, I didn't get rough with you, I just held out your atabrine ration."

"What kind of deal? I don't think I want to be an organizer."

"I don't think you'd be a very good one."

"No future in it. Particularly not after you chumps grabbed a Moro lady to be a 'cook' in this outlaw hangout."

"What's that? Moro *lady*? Who is she?"

Barstow, reading the alarm in Weyler's eyes, knew that the man had been sure of his ability to trade with his captors, else he'd not been so concerned about future troubles. "What kind of a deal did you have in mind?"

"These papers, all of them. And five thousand pesos cash."

Andrés whispered, "His head is worth twenty thousand, but the idea is nice, cash is easier carry."

Weyler's confidence was returning too rapidly to suit Barstow. The man was too easy about it all. He expected something to happen. So did Barstow. The drone of the radio abruptly swelled to a blast. Ordinarily, he would have blamed it on a trick of the atmosphere, but the tone of the parley had been off key.

Barstow said, without raising his voice, "Watch behind you."

His companions obeyed, wheeling with bolo and pistol. Weyler shouted in panic, "Don't shoot! For God's sake—"

A scramble followed, and yells. Barstow flung himself because Weyler was in motion. A pistol blasted, and a shotgun roared. Pellets raked the room. The charge shattered the kerosene lamp which hung from the ceiling. Fuel drenched the straw matting on the floor. The wick and its feeder landed some feet away, with the former still burning. Two pistol shots shook the hall. The back door slammed. Andrés screeched, *"Putang-na-mo!"*

Barstow whipped about to turn his pistol on Weyler. The organizer fired first. Then the wick winked out. Weyler bolted for the door. Like the one who had run to the rear, he yelled, and from a distance came answers Barstow called, "Hold it, you fellows! Hold it!"

CHAPTER V

BULLETS OF SAND

BARSTOW'S first call rallied his men. "The machine gunners in the car must've heard the shooting, they'll be back," he told them.

Andrés said, "I see headlights coming. Where is the paper?"

"They look alike in the dark," Barstow grumbled, "and they're scattered from hell to breakfast."

Pacífico said, "I fix him quick," and struck a match.

The kerosene soaked matting flamed up smokily.

"Quicker'n reading," Barstow admitted. "And those headlights are coming this way—out the back, and let him keep his head for a while!"

He led the way, and with little time to spare. Deceptive dancing shadows made the men who piled out of the car hose the grounds with bursts of gunfire. This distraction gave Barstow his chance to run for the Hukbalahap arsenal, whose guards had quit their posts to see what was happening at Weyler's house.

Getting in through a ventilator was easy. Once under the corrugated iron roof, and atop the heaped cases of cartridges, Barstow looked out, and said, regretfully, "Didn't do more than get the place sooted up. They've whipped out the blaze."

"Maybe the papers all burn up?"

"Good chance," Barstow answered. "If not all, then most of them. But the way things stand, Weyler's going to hunt for us. To keep us from hunting him. He doesn't know, he can't guess how many more of us there are, waiting for him to turn his back. Having a bodyguard hidden at the house shows he was already on edge."

"No guard," Andrés corrected. "That was José Puyat with the one-barrel shotgun. How is it, you have the back turned, but you know about him one bit sooner than we do?"

"That radio. Could've been the air, but my skin'd been creeping, and that sudden blaring gave me a hunch someone was sneaking in the dark. Getting weight on or off a ground wire, or aerial wire, that changes volume."

"We don't understand the radio. My cousin Domingo, he had one very funny, it scream and whistle when you lay the hand on it, but you take the hand off, it don't make no talk, no music, no nothing."

After the summing up of Mindanao radios, Barstow demanded, "You say it was Puyat that came at us with a shotgun?"

"Oh, yes, Puyat. He is a fool, if he shoots, he blows hell out of his boss too near by you. Then he don't know what to point at, so he shoots the lamp before we get him."

"I heard Weyler ask those men where Puyat was, as if he hadn't known."

"Weyler is one big liar."

"Yes, but why?"

"Because," Andrés answered triumphantly, "Puyat do not want to see the men. Maybe he owes them money."

"Could be." Barstow took time out for thought. Then, "First thing he said, just to be funny, was that Puyat had a *guapa* on the brain. Bet he was joking in earnest. You know something? Puyat may have a new girl, with plans for her."

"How you mean, is not plans always very much alike?"

"Mmm . . . sure, of course. But look. He won't talk to the other important Huks, they had money on their minds. And when the man who collects dues doesn't want to meet *compadres* who do the same kind of work—"

Pacífico cut in, "My cousin, Domingo, one time he takes everyone's money to bet on a cockfight, he is sure the champion is going to get cut up, he don't place the bet, but the champion win, and Domingo, he runs like hell, he don't come home for three years. Ha! Now I catch on!"

"Putang-na-mo!" Andrés exclaimed. "I catch on myself, he is going to run out with the money and the *guapa*."

"All right," Barstow said, "we all have the same idea, and it's worth looking into. Suppose we catch Puyat, the big shot, going over the hill

with pesos and *guapa*. The rank and file Huks will get good and sore. That's all we need. A bit of mutiny, a bit of counter-revolution, and the whole racket will blow up. And break poor Carag's heart."

"That Carag, he is a chump. He don't even get pay for talking to your people."

"How many cartridges you got?" Barstow asked.

"Just what is in the clips, with one spare."

"And we're sitting on a munitions dump. I don't see how there's any room for snitching from the treasury, after buying all these cartridges. Get busy!"

There'd be all calibers; but Barstow knew the heft and the bulk of a case of two thousand .45's, and he quickly located one in the dark. Risking one of his precious matches, he saw that his hands had not fooled him. Andrés and Pacífico set to work with bolos.

Barstow dipped in. "Sand!" he growled. "Try another."

They tried. "Is more sand," Andres announced.

"See about the Arisakas and the .30-'06's."

Most of the ammunition cases contained nothing but sand.

AFTER tapping chest after chest, they did finally find cases containing rifle cartridges. There were no rifles. Apparently these had all been issued to the Huk forces, along with the machine guns. However, there were several Japanese "knee" mortars, and some 60 mm. shells. With this light armament, three men could move rapidly, and while their ammunition supply lasted, they could effectively bomb camped groups, or light buildings. However, Barstow advised, "Leave the stuff here. We'll come back and get it after we look in on Puyat . . ."

The distant firing had stopped. Once outside the arsenal, Barstow crouched in the shadow of a bamboo clump, and listened. The air was still. Not a leaf or stalk rustled. After a moment. he said, "Either the shooting's over, just a raid on some barrio, or else the dying out of the wind keeps us from getting it. But it adds up."

"What is the total, sir?"

"Man plus money plus new girl plus shooting toward the coast equals time for a foxy man to grab his winnings and run. Let the chumps face the guns."

"Someone is get sore when the arsenal has no cartridges."

"Just what I was getting at. Let's go!"

Barstow, leading the way to Puyat's house, moved with new strength. He had victory in his hands. Without fear and without disguise, he could stand in front of a thousand armed Huks, and tell them to look to the arsenal which their ten-peso contributions had filled with cat-conveniences instead of cartridges. There'd be nothing left of the organizers; and the planters who had struggled for years to clear jungle and grow rubber, abacá, coffee, and tobacco would by *muy simpático* again, except for the extortioners who had given landlords a bad name.

"I was a chump," Barstow told himself, "not making a deal with the general. Now I'll be lucky if the old buzzard gives me back my twenty-peso note and offers me a drink of Haig & Haig. He'll droop one eyelid, and he'll say in the preacher voice he puts on every once in a while, 'God bless you, Pete, you are a born patriot, I know I am leaving Mindanao in good hands when I leave.' And he'll be laughing to bust a gut all the time!"

For some moments, Barstow considered the possibility of a dash to Lanao Province, and thence to Parang, to make a deal, either before the Huks blew up, or else, before the news of the blowup got to the general. Then he shrugged, remembering the proverb which had so puzzled several of his English-speaking guerrilla comrades: Don't count your bridges before they are hatched.

"But, sir, bridges do not hatch, clearly you refer to chickens, is it not so?" they would insist; then, with Filipino courtesy, "But we do not speak the vernacular, only the bookish tongue of Milton and Shakespeare."

Puyat's house, rambling and weathered, had windowpanes of transparent shell instead of glass. The dull glint of the verandah indicated that modernization had at least gone as far as copper screening stolen from some government project. Since there were no lights, Barstow had to scout by ear. The breeze, springing up again, stirred bamboo to a dry, whispering rustle. A fine rain tickled the corrugated metal

roof. All this blotted the sound of Barstow's going about, but it also kept him from sensing clearly what went on above.

Someone might have stayed away from the cockfight in the bamboo arena. From time to time, he heard the distance-thinned screeches of spectators.

At the back door, he flashed his firefly vial. From the front, which Andrés and Pacífico had covered, came an answering flicker-flicker—but something intervened before the acknowledgment was complete. Somewhere in the hall was a bulk which had not been there a moment previously. Barstow made a fresh signal, with a wide sweep, hoping that his men would observe the obstacle which he had noted. Though the floor was too solid to creek under foot, the house itself had protesting joists. The coolness of the rain made the corrugated metal roof give a muted twang. A sheet struggled against a nail.

But there was no further evidence of that which moved in the hall. Such stealth in his own place of employment or residence suggested that whoever moved about had sensed that there were prowlers. The man might, on the other hand, be looting or spying. Then, as his eyes accommodated themselves to the indoor gloom, Barstow caught the ghost of a gleam: the glint of metal. He got a whiff of tobacco scent—not *dobe*, but American. Someone important was on the move.

Seconds passed. The man in the hall knew his business.

Behind Barstow was a furtive scratching. The metallic glint seemed nearer. Barstow held his breath, and heard breathing. Carefully, he flattened himself. From the rear came a vague sound as of someone a little less than perfect in stealth.

Then he felt a bare foot against his ribs, and heard a gasp. Barstow got busy. He bowled the man over backward. The blade thudded against the partition, and rang against the floor. At the same time came a gurgle and a cry choked before it was fairly uttered. Now that the floor-shaking impact had made stealth futile, a familiar voice demanded from the rear, "You get him good?"

"Come on and see."

In a moment, the three crouched about the man who had been clipped senseless during the instant of helplessness which had followed his backward flop to the hardwood floor. The barefooted Filipino had a bunch of keys. This must be Puyat's steward.

"Flashlight," Barstow whispered, as he continued his search. "Let's see if the boss has started packing up."

Andrés hefted his bolo. Barstow shook his head. "Not unless you have to. Anyway, the guy may be worth keeping alive. Pacífico, you keep an eye outside."

THE TOOK the keys and flashlight. In an unlocked bedroom he found suitcases all packed with lavender shirts, pink shirts, striped shirts. The kit reeked from hair tonic and pomade. On the ring was a Chrysler ignition key. There had been no such car near Weyler's place. Apparently Puyat had gone afoot in order to avoid being conspicuous.

The next room was the one from which the steward had emerged. Judging from mosquito netting and the depressions in the bed, he had stretched out on the counterpane, fully dressed except for shoes, cat-napping while awaiting Puyat's return. A carabao-hide suitcase with hand-shaped hardware sat in a corner, all packed. The dresser was bare.

"Confidential man, super-steward anyway," Barstow decided.

He tried several keys when he came to a locked door. During his fumbling, he heard a stirring beyond the panel. Someone moved stealthily. Though there was no telling what might be waiting, he suspected that someone was locked in, instead of locking intruders out. "Open up!" he commanded, brusquely.

No answer. Under cover of kicking and shouldering the door, he slipped the key home, and twisted it. He thrust the door open, but for all his being on balance, ready to duck the attack he expected, he was caught off guard.

For a moment, he thought that he had liberated a cage of tigers. Then he figured that he had grabbed an armful of girl with ferocious nails. In another instant, he corrected his impression: the girl in the silk jacket had grabbed him. Short of knocking her cold, he could do nothing. He could hardly hold his own, for she was bent on dismembering, biting and clawing him to ribbons. She wasn't saying a word. She needed her breath for business. A massive bracelet whacked his temple, making the darkness a blaze of red. But he managed to hold her close enough to avoid serious damage. He spat out a heavy strand of oiled hair and gasped in her ear, *"No-good-American-son-of-a———"*

The fury subsided. Instead of a battery of buzz-saws, he had a supple and shapely creature who might tape five feet one. She said, in English, "You come to let me go?"

"Not enough left of me to lock you up."

The things she promised Puyat weren't fit to inflict even on a Jap. "We'll take him to pieces later," Barstow told her. "Right now, we've got to move fast. He may be back any time and with more men than we can handle."

"How many have you?"

"Two. You're from Lanao?"

"My father is Datu Amboluto. My name is Amina. A band of Huks swooped down on the market place and grabbed all the women in sight. You take me home now."

"I've got business to attend to. Later, we'll take you to Lake Lanao. Glad to."

"Where'll we wait till then?"

"Don't worry about that. Andrés! Pacífico!"

The two answered. The steward's breathing indicated that he had been gagged just short of strangulation. Barstow stepped on the key ring he had dropped in the scuffle. This reminded him of Puyat's Chrysler. "Pacífico," he said,

Short of knocking the girl cold, he could do nothing.

"I've located the *guapa* our friend had on the brain. Datu Amboluto's daughter. You take the car and drive to Cagayan, the Huks'll recognize and pass it without a word. Take Amina home and we'll have friends where they'll do us some good. . ."

"What do you do?"

"Stay here to see what I can see."

"That is crazy."

"Isn't either. If she's gone, these *bugaos* will figure all the disturbance was to get her out of here, and nobody'll be looking for any of us."

"But Weyler, he knows better."

Barstow cursed Weyler bitterly. Then, "He knows I have Moro friends, and he doesn't know that I never met Datu Amboluto."

Though they accepted his logic, Andrés protested, "You drive the car, we stay to look and see."

Amina said, "That is very nice, I like that. I'll tell my father you are one swell fellow.. A gentleman, speaking the English beautifully. Where did you learn it?"

"You'd be surprised, darling!" He laid a hand on her shoulder, and hustled her toward the door. "Get going, all of us. Yes, and bring that hunk of cold meat from the hall, he'll come in handy."

Amina cried out in sheer ecstasy. "Oh, marvelous! We'll tie him to a carabao's horns at the next fight! If we could only get that Puyat to put him on the other carabao . . . aaah. . ."

Amina was a gentle soul, truly a chip off the old block.

CHAPTER VI

"THAT NO-GOOD AMERICAN—"

THE road to Cagayan de Misamis was somewhat less than a boulevard. And while carabaos were scarce as gold dollars, having been beefed to feed the Japs, Pacífico narrowly missed hitting two of the fifteen hundred pound hulks as he booted Puyat's sedan northward. In the back seat, Amina squealed with glee, and clung to Barstow as they were being shaken up like dice in a box. . .

"Watch it, you idiot!" Barstow croaked through a mouthful of long hair, ear-rings, and tattered silk jacket. "We've got a good start, you'll bust the springs or tear the front wheels —*watch it!*"

Pacífico, grinning over his shoulder, answered, "Sir, I am watching it, I just finish looking at the road, is nothing—"

He looked again, yelled, cut the wheel. The rear fender, hitting the rump of a horse, made a sound like a bass drum. The car careened, whipped, stayed clear of the ditch; somehow, she did not spin. Triumphantly, as he straightened out and booted the throttle, he looked back to resume, "If we drive like you say, everybody know it is not José Puyat with good chauffeur."

"That is right, Pete," Amina declared. "Oh, I like this."

"It'd be more fun in a hammock," Barstow told her.

The next pitch landed them on the floor, with the well-trussed prisoner. Andrés was asleep in a corner. His head bobbed as though he had a rubber neck. A cigarette smoldered between his lips. Amina, getting back to the seat, pointed with one hand as she got her skirt into place with the other, and said, "You see what I mean, he is relaxed, he is not worried. . ."

"Where'd you go to school?"

"In a convent in Frisco, only they don't give me religion, just cultural subjects."

"The first words I ever heard you speak," Barstow said, when the road smoothed out a bit, "didn't come from any convent. What was the idea? You didn't know I was an American."

Amina laughed. "Of course I didn't, you looked like a mestizo. But you looked at me with so much interest. This nice man, I say to myself, maybe he will help me if I say something, only what must I say for the guards not to understand too much, or they beat my brains out. Then I have it, very simple. The big man of the Hukbalahaps is Weyler, who is American. So, I say what I said—because the guards think it is very natural for me to say about the boss. But, you are a smart man, so you understand what I mean—*come look for me at the house of the no-good-American-son—*"

"Yeah, and it worked. But you had me guessing."

"Oh, I am so sorry, I didn't mean calling you dirty names."

"Everybody learned a few words of good American from the Army, and everyone hates Americans' guts after the Army has been around awhile—uh-huh, it all makes good sense, and you're as smart as you're beautiful, and I bet the nuns were weeping their eyes out when you finally left the convent!"

"Oh, yes, they were sorry when I go," she said, seriously. "I am sorry, too. But my father say I must learn to be a lady, and when I get used to it, it is nice. Only, I don't like American clothes, the shoes are not good, nothing is comfortable."

Pacífico called, "Wake him up! Maybe trouble ahead."

Andrés shook himself, drew his pistol before Barstow could lay a hand on him. "On the floor, Amina! Looks like men with guns."

"No, no, if they see me, then they know all is right, Puyat always has beautiful women. Maybe you better get down."

The car slackened speed. Since rifle-armed men came from both sides of the road, Barstow

and Andrés, cracking the doors, crouched with pistols ready.

A man wearing only side-arms gestured to indicate, "Keep going!" The guards drew back. They'd recognized Puyat's car.

"You see, it is easy," Amina said. "But I must fix the hair, it is all mussed up."

As she set to work, she carried on, "You know what I am going to do?"

"Mmm . . . hard telling."

"Guess!"

"I couldn't. You're a three-ring circus."

"I am going to marry an American."

Barstow gulped. "Uh—um—noble ambition—but—they'd insist on your wearing uncomfortable clothes, and they're no good sons—"

"Oh, but some are awfully nice, I saw some at Dansalan when I visited my uncle, Datu Farid."

"Your father wouldn't put up with it for a minute." Barstow began to feel as though he had been staked on an ant-hill; Amina's notions alarmed him. "Datu Amboluto's old-fashioned and strict, they tell me."

"You don't know my father. Strict in some ways, but he likes to be modern; why did he send me to the States to be a lady?" Without waiting for an answer, she continued, "With the war over, he is going to send maybe five-six more of my sisters to the States."

"Uh—how many sisters have you got?"

"Eleven. That makes him very sore, there are not enough Moros dignified enough to marry us. Then he sees a light. Give us to important Americans, then when the Christian Filipinos make trouble, the Americans make them lay off. Now you understand?"

"Plenty. But I never heard of anyone pushing Datu Amboluto around—not after the first nudge."

"Oh, no, never. Only, now it is this independence, and these Christian pig-eaters, they don't like us."

BARSTOW looked over Pacífico's shoulders to note the mileage; what he read indicated that the speed had been largely illusion. He could taste dawn in the air, though the bumping and jouncing drowned the daybreak voices of the jungle.

Far off, a flash of red reached through the swirling mists. Thin lines of green and of red laced the gloom. Pacífico tramped on the brake, but even before he heard the jarring chatter of a .50 caliber machine gun, Barstow knew that he had seen the flame-drawn trajectory of tracer bullets. The prolonged *crrrrrump* of high explosive interpreted that first blot of red. "Mortars, by God! There goes another—"

"Arisakas near us," Andrés said, with the confidence of a connoisseur in musketry. "Huks going to work. Springfields far off."

Amina frowned. "Pete, is that a skirmish or a battle—what is the difference?"

"Shut up! I'm trying to hear."

"But I must learn better English."

"What you say now?" Pacífico demanded.

"Going back by daylight won't be healthy, we've insulted all the leading citizens."

"Follow game trails," Andrés suggested. "To Mt. Alihad."

"Huh! With Amina along?"

The Moro lady cried, "You louse, I'll walk till you fall on your face, and then I'll carry you the rest of the way!"

Barstow sighed. "Honey baby, you could. Because you weren't in the States long enough to find out you're too precious to lift a finger or be kicked around."

"It is easy, sir," Pacífico announced. "We have the long and beautiful car of an important man. We go up to the front lines to make morale. Then with the flag of truce, we go to deal with the enemy—only, it is not the enemy but the constabulary, the Military Police. Use that pig-brother's shirt, on the floor, it is not too dirty."

Barstow heard the whack and spat of bullets going wide of their mark. He looked at Amina. She said, "Don't be a sissy, they couldn't hit fish in a barrel, I mean those Military Police, they're just scaring the *baluds*."

"If they can hit pigeons accidentally, they can—oh, damn it, you asked for it! Step on it, Pacífico, but use your bean."

Ahead, in a cleared area, men behind sandbags blazed away with rifles and machine guns. Others worked their way along a knoll to flank a line which was momentarily being strengthened by reinforcements. These made excellent use of cover, the only evidence of their arrival being the increased volume of fire.

Pigs squealed and raced through vegetable patches when a mortar shell kicked up a mushroom of dirt and bamboo shacks. Chickens, lean and rangy, took wing for the jungle. A shack began to blaze. Bamboo joints exploded like musketry. Well to the right was a ravine, and if like the thousands of others in Bukidnon, it would be narrow, with vertical rocky walls. However, its fringe of timber did offer cover should the enemy venture to file along the near rim to outflank the Huks. Tracer flashes showed that the Huk outpost commander spotted, or thought that he had spotted such an attempt.

Barstow got all this at a glance. Ahead was a culvert held by the point party which had blundered into the Huk outposts. The Huks carried on well, though wasting a lot of ammunition on the tree tops, and kicking up dirt fifty yards short of the nearest enemy group. Knotty-legged men darted about with bandoliers. Others directed the fire.

From a game trail came a file of Huk reinforcements. A man with field glasses popped up from his command post, his staff following, and shouted to the newcomers. Pacífico blasted his horn but got no result.

"Jesus, Mary and Joseph!" he snarled. "Too many to run down."

The commander however had heard. He gestured, and yelled, "Go back, go back! For the love of God, *Señor* Puyat, back where you belong!"

Pacífico leaned on the horn and yelled, "He is in a hurry, he goes to parley!"

The enemy noted the new target. Bullets, dirt, and rocks geysered up. The first bursts were short. The next ones chewed the toes of laggards. The road was clear. Pacífico yelled, "Hold the hats!"

Andrés waved a white flag. A volley rayed the upper part of the windshield. There was a hammering and screeching as bullets skated along the curved metal top. The musketry ceased. A man stepped up from the culvert, gesturing. He was in uniform.

White flags, however, do not immediately get recognition along an entire skirmish line, not even a small one. As Pacífico booted the throttle, Amina squealed, "Look, look, Moros! My people!"

Hell burst out of the right. Men wearing red-and-black turbans came from the flank. They'd climbed up the wall of the supposedly impassable ravine. With rifles, with kreese, with yard-long kampilanes they charged. "*Aaaaah buguy!*" they howled; and some of those who were knocked over picked themselves up, to race on again, only to drop and lie kicking after half a dozen bounds.

"Those devils wouldn't stop for a million flags of truce!"

The Huks blasted away, except for some who

Choking black fumes billowed through smashed glass as the vehicle rolled into the ditch.

abandoned their machine guns and ran in panic from men who wouldn't stay dead, men who didn't know they'd been hit.

"Flag, hell! Step on it!" Barstow shouted.

Then the front of the car lifted. He felt as though a hammer had struck him. Choking black fumes billowed through smashed glass. The vehicle rolled into the ditch. Another mortar shell bellowed. Foot-long fragments screamed in every direction. Mud began to drop on the wreckage. Barstow's ride was over, though it would be some time before he or his companions would know what had happened.

PUYAT'S pie-face twitched; for all its pudginess, it had squared off into angles pointing downward. His hand shook as he added another cigarette to the heap in the ashtray. The wrath in his eyes would have been corroding flame, had there not also been so much fear to dilute the fury with which he regarded his prisoners.

Fear came on the wind: the nitrous taint of powder and of mortar shells' bursting charges mingled with the smell of burning grass, of nipa thatch, and of bamboo. Now that the advance of the Military Police, the Civilian Guard, and the Lanao Moros had been checked, the firing had tapered off to sniping, with an occasional exchange of machine gun bursts let off in spite or derision.

A courier came running in. "*Señor,*" he gasped, "the colonel begs for more ammunition, he can drive them off, break them in half, for the love of God, hurry it!"

Puyat gulped, mopped his forehead with a purple-edged handkerchief. Hair tonic reek spread about him. "Tell *Señor* Colonel Ortega it is on the way! Doubtless the porters are lost, more will go out at once."

Weyler's square face was drawn. His eyes were red and feverishly bright. The messenger had barely run down the verandah steps when Weyler said, "If you hadn't been so crazy about women, we'd not have Datu Amboluto's madmen in the game—those devils are causing all the trouble!"

Puyat choked, then said, coldly, "*Señor,* you forget yourself. It was your idea to 'requisition' some 'cooks,' so our men wouldn't quarrel so much about women. Am I to blame that some idiot grabbed a Moro hell-cat along with a dozen other women in the market place? Who the devil ever figured on Amboluto's daughter being in that pimple of a barrio? They don't know she's here, who'd have told them?"

"Oh, they don't know we've got her? When've you ever heard of Amboluto teaming up with law, order, the Military or any other police? Nonsense, *hombre!*"

Puyat let out a deep breath, and leaned back. Barstow, sitting against the wall, with Amina lashed to one ankle, and Pacífico to the other, saw that the man was weary, and as nearly ready to crack as Weyler. He didn't know where Andrés was. He had thus far no idea

as to what had happened between the blasting of Puyat's Chrysler and the return to Puyat's house, except that the Hukbalahap army was getting its initiation, and taking it well.

Puyat and Weyler had no place to go, unless they slipped out, afoot, making for the hinterland. In such a flight, they could succeed, provided that their own followers did not hunt them down.

Barstow whispered to Amita, "The arsenal is empty. What's worse, that'll be hard to explain to the boys who paid their dues, and heard about the munitions for independence. Puyat should have run out yesterday with his loot."

She asked, "Why are we here?"

"Where would we be?"

Amina made a slicing gesture. "We took his car."

"We're being saved for something."

"It won't be nice."

Barstow answered with a shrug. Pacífico ignored them both. He had a long sliver of bamboo. With it he traced and retraced the outline of his left foot, a task which made him frown from intentness. Barstow spent some moments watching Pacífico's all-absorbing task, and envied the man. When he shifted his attention back to Amina, he saw that she also was a thousand miles away.

Puyat, their fellow Filipino, was all in a sweat because there was something which he could still do; they were at ease because there was nothing left for them to do. Barstow's fellow prisoners had something which they could not lend him. They had been born with the gift of either accepting the inevitable without anxiety, or else seeking a suicidal finish-fight. The man who could do neither seemed to become somewhat more useless every moment.

Worst of all, Puyat, once prodded to desperation, would go out in Malay style. The way he had exhaled, and buckled in his chair, at Weyler's telling dig, warned Barstow; so did the unseeing stare which reached beyond the walls of the house. . .

Another messenger, just one more, to say that the ammunition was gone—that'd do it.

Barstow said, boldly, "Puyat! You're free, I'm tied, but we're in the same boat. You, too, Weyler. Carag's lucky—say, where is Carag?"

Weyler laughed, but only for a change of pace. "He's lucky! Oh, he's lucky! He's a capitalist now, he ran out on us when he heard a Chinaman would pay cash for his mining claim at Makabagla. It's the deal that broke Carag's father's heart, and now they say it's good—it's good—share-the-wealth is all through with us now!"

Puyat snarled, "Shut up, you fool! Do you want those men outside to think you can laugh while they're waiting for ammunition?"

"Wait a second," Barstow cut in. "You're doing this wrong. No matter how much ammunition you have, the enemy is bound to have more, and can get still more, by sending to the coast for it. Order a strategic retreat—"

"*Hombre*, what's it to you?" Puyat demanded.

But Weyler brightened. "Captain Barstow was a guerrilla. Let's hear the rest of it."

Barstow sized them up, and decided that neither suspected him of knowing that the arsenal contained very few cartridges and a lot of sand in boxes. He said, "Here's what it is to me! If your people take a beating, they'll want the hides of your prisoners. They'll figure that we were spies who had a hand in it."

"The strategic retreat?" Weyler prompted.

"Simple. Move your supplies back, way back, and retreat. Get the enemy all set for an easy victory. Then pull him into an ambush. Get him away from his supplies, get him into country where he can't get any sent up easily. The way we tricked the Japs, time and again."

That convinced Puyat. He began to write, and when he had finished, he called one of the couriers who waited outside. As the man left with the message for Colonel Ortega, Puyat turned to Weyler and said, "If we withdraw, they'll take the town, call it a victory, and have too much sense to follow."

But Weyler, though he said nothing, clearly showed his doubts.

CHAPTER VII

STRATEGIC RETREAT

THERE was in Santa Rosa a truck which no one but an optimist or a very desperate man would trust—but since this was its day to run, there was a chance that it would keep going until it reached the end of the road. Even in this tight spot, Puyat and Weyler valued their prisoners. They bundled them into the rickety vehicle, along with grub and personal belongings.

As the truck smoked and jerked its way clear of the town, Barstow saw that the *abacá*-processing plant was afire. A few mortar shells let go, scattering blazing timber. At first puzzled, Barstow presently got the point: embers would conceal the fraud from disgusted fighting men whose first move would have been to break in and look for cartridges.

First a yarn convincing in the stress of fighting without sufficient ammunition; then another story, about a fire at the arsenal. There had been a fire, and then an explosion. The two stories could then be reconciled by Puyat's claiming that he'd not dared send the devastating truth to the front line, lest the entire outfit be demoralized to mutiny or surrender. That was the way Barstow figured it out, as he jounced and jarred under the eye of guards who rode the truck. Puyat and Weyler, a little

more comfortable in their spot just behind the cab, had regained their confidence. Judging from gestures and posture, they were planning either escape, or a come-back.

Barstow explained this to Amina, and added, "They'll have a good chance to collect more pesos, because the arsenal blew up, and the people way out in the bondoks will get such a kick out of there having been any battle at all that they'll believe more than ever. It'll soon be built up to a victory; it'll certainly be one if Ortega makes good a retreat."

Amina nodded wisely. "That is how they did it in the States, when I was in school during the war. We read all the time how fine the Americans and the Filipinos fought the Japs. The commentators, never saying nothing about the bungling with all our planes at Clark Field caught on the ground, nothing about the boners, only about the bravery, never about the Death March until it was time to make the people sore again. You see, out here, we know your way to fool them!"

Barstow grimaced. "You learned too much, sister!"

"But at last, you win. So, that is how these fellows think."

At the end of the road, two trails forked into the jungle. One snaked toward the rattan cable suspension bridge which spanned the Cagayan to lead into interior Bukidnon. The other reached for the volcanic heights which rimmed Lanao Province.

"Now that we're afoot," Barstow promised Amina, "we'll have a chance of making a break for Moro-land."

She watched the guards, who were unloading the truck. "You see, Pete? They make camp, to wait for the army. They are brave now, from your good idea."

Weyler came up and said, "You ought to be a stockholder, Pete. It's going to work."

"What makes you so nice to us?"

Weyler chuckled. "Wait and see." He took a bolo from one of his men, and slashed the fibre which bound the three captives together. "You two fellows get busy and help." Then, to Amina, "You, too! And don't tell me you can't cook."

"Oh, yes, I can cook," she assured him, with a sweetness and submission which made Barstow blink. "I studied Household Economics, back in the States."

THE first of the Huks to take refuge in the jungle were making barricades of sharpened bamboo stakes when Barstow said to Amina, "Your uncle—what was his name?"

"I have dozens of uncles."

"The one you mentioned just before we ran into the shooting—remember?"

"Oh. Datu Farid. Why?"

"It's all come back to me. One of Datu Ryan's wives is related to Datu Farid. You're one of Datu Ryan's in-laws, so he's got to help you—he's got to give your father a hand."

"That's right."

"O.K. Nothing to do but get word to Datu Ryan. He'll hurry over and hit this outfit from the rear. They'll be bottled up, and there'll be no more Huks in Mindanao."

Her eyes gleamed from picturing the finish of Weyler and Puyat. Daughters were no asset to Amboluto. Since he had an oversupply, a humiliating excess of the useless creatures, the old man was touchy beyond the average Moro's sensitiveness, so that Amina's kidnaping demanded a spectacular reprisal.

Then Barstow looked at the weary Huks. Bandoliers and cartridge belts were almost empty. There weren't enough camotes and maize to go around. A good many of the fighters had been wounded. A hollow-eyed and overworked doctor did his best, which was not much, for he had hardly any medical supplies to treat men who had been equipped for quick victory, not for defeat. He came over and said to Amina, "Be good enough to help me."

"It's probably your duty to do what you can, but the quicker these people rot, the better I'll like it!"

The doctor shrugged, and would have gone to appeal to some of the other camp followers, had not Barstow detained him. "*Señor*, just one moment, while I speak to the young lady." Then, to Amina, who regarded him with amazement and defiance, he said, "These poor devils don't know what it is all about. They've been fooled. Cheats and crooks have taken them to camp."

"They were shooting at my people!"

"Your people kreesed a good number of them."

"They'll finish the rest of them, sooner or later." She pointed at the wounded who sat or lay in grimy, sweating huddles, some groaning a little, but most of them enduring in silence. "Infidel pigs, pig-lovers! And after what they did to you, running you off your plantation—oh, you're a fool, too! An old woman!"

Barstow beckoned to Pacífico. "You tell her."

"Be pleased to listen," Pacífico began. "Was it an old woman who turned you loose? Was it old women who rode with you right into the firing line?"

"No, no," she conceded, generously enough, "that was done in the way of my people."

"Then listen to this man. He is right. All these are Filipinos. Give the doctor a hand. My friend here, my boss, he has told me that some day it makes no difference whether you are Christian or Moro, nothing counts except you are a Filipino. Like it was during the war, when we all hunted one enemy."

"But this is crazy!"

Barstow looked her in the eye. "Go, get busy, I'll be busy too."

"How?"

Having won her interest, he whispered, "I'll get Datu Ryan. It'll be easy, slipping out of camp."

"I'll leave with you, and there'll be no need of getting him."

"You can't tell what we'll need. There may still be a finish fight. But you help the doctor. That'll make it easier for me and Pacífico to do what we have to do."

She went with the doctor, and set to work boiling strips torn from shirts. There were no other bandages. Barstow followed, to assist with the field surgery. This was not the time to tell about the boxes filled with sand instead of cartridges. At the moment, with no enemy in sight, they still swallowed the explanations of their leaders.

During pauses in the heartbreaking work of probing for bullets, binding bamboo splints with jungle fiber, and patching cuts with equally crude devices, Barstow watched the faces of the officers. They knew that something was wrong, but they could not possibly know how they had been betrayed from the start.

Puyat and Weyler however were confident. Barstow wondered why.

Later, the two sat with Ortega, the "colonel" who had turned from farming to utilize as best he could what he had learned as a noncom in the Philippine Army. By torchlight, they planned; and though he could not hear details, Barstow made a good guess when, finally, men were sent to collect all the cartridges in the camp.

"Give a few picked men all the ammunition they can use," Barstow explained to Pacífico. "Fix up an ambush, cut down a company of Military Police, and get a fresh start."

"That is how we used to do it," Pacífico agreed, "only there is more to it than you see."

"How?"

"When the shooting begins, Puyat and Weyler can run, no one will notice. This thing is no more good, where do the men get another ten pesos for dues?"

Barstow considered for a moment. "You've got something. So I'll not try to get Datu Ryan. It'd be finished before he could take a hand. But we can nail two men sneaking out with their loot."

"What do we do with them?"

"Just show the Huks that the treasury is going over the hill, and start talking about the and boxes!"

They went to help Amina make a shelter of bamboo and grass. Barstow, squatting beside a mudge, pictured the country through which the Huks had fled. Instead of sleeping, he was busy trying to figure where the Huks would set their ambush. There were no signs to indicate that men were going back to prepare a trap for the advancing Military Police. Perhaps they weren't advancing. Between choking smoke, and mosquitoes who defied the fumes, Barstow groped in a stupor which was halfway between sleep and wakefulness.

What aroused him, shortly before dawn, was a general search of the camp. He quickly learned that Amina was missing. Puyat and Weyler came up, cursing and scowling, to demand, "You, there! Where is she?"

Amina set to work boiling strips torn from shirts.

Pacífico shrugged, looked helpless, and let Barstow answer: "How should I know? If I'd helped her slip out of camp, would I come back?"

"Where'd she go?"

"Do you think she'd tell me? You might have known that when she went sweet and helped the doctor, she was planning some trick or other."

PUYAT and Weyler eyed each other. They were worried. It was clear now that they had considered Amina as a hostage for their own heads, in the event of being cornered. Weyler said, to buck up his own courage, "Look some more, she couldn't be crazy enough to start out alone and afoot. Check up! You, Colonel Ortega! Are there any men missing?"

The beetle-browed officer grimaced. "Some without ammunition did leave. None of those who count—the ones you trust with cartridges are all present and accounted for."

These, the picked men, were being mustered. Barstow noted the satisfaction which momentarily brightened Puyat's fat face and popeyes. He said in a voice which did not carry beyond Weyler and his aide, "Your personal bodyguard? Your get-away party?"

"How'd you like to be tied and gagged?" Weyler snapped.

Barstow chuckled. "Try it and see. I helped doctor a lot of those poor devils who haven't even a cartridge between them and hell."

Weyler snorted contemptuously, and glanced again at his "Praetorian Guard." That glance confirmed Barstow's suspicions, turning surmise into certainty. The organizers of the Huks were already preparing against mutiny, rather than concentrating the reserve of cartridges to prepare an ambush whose disastrous impact would make the Military Police fall back to reorganize, and get more supplies and heavier equipment.

Barstow said, quietly, "I told you I didn't know where Amina went, but I can guess. Maybe you can?"

"She's a hell-cat, and dizzy enough to think she can hoof it alone—"

Barstow cut in, "Amina may not have to hoof as far as you think. If anyone's lagging, it'll be the Military Police, not Datu Amboluto's men. Those devils may be a lot nearer than you imagine."

"Shut up, you damned fool!" Weyler snarled. "You'd be kreesed with us!"

"Sure I would. Otherwise I'd not wasted my guess. That girl either knew from signs, or else she had a hunch that her people were close. They can find us a lot easier than we can find them—or get away from them."

The chunky colonel grimaced and crossed himself. "That's the holy truth!" he muttered, and went to prepare for trouble.

Presently, a plane circled over jungle and cogon. It quickly became clear that the pilot was scouting. Finally, he dropped tiny parachutes. Despite Puyat's objections, the Huks began to scatter, each hoping for first grab, whether at a prize or a booby trap. One Huk, one of the few who could read, soon returned to camp with a printed message which he waved as he shouted, "They tell us, everybody surrender, or there is large-scale action, with the army and bombing planes and everything, just like war."

The Praetorian Guard, Barstow noted, had not been posted to defend the position against the Moros who undoubtedly were maneuvering for a blow. These elite troops had thus far made no concession other than giving up part of the ammunition which made their belts and bandoliers bulge. "Gunpowder and run-out powder," Barstow reasoned. "They're loaded with both."

If, like Weyler and Puyat, Barstow got away with his hide still intact, he'd count it a blessing—but the escape of the two troublemakers would leave him totally defeated, and them free to start fresh disturbances in some other province. The more he saw of all this, the more he realized that saving his own plantation would be an empty gesture unless the two schemers came to an end which appealed to Malay tastes. Furthermore, the scattering or destruction of a band of Huks would prove nothing—the only real objective was to demonstrate that there were ways other and better than revolt and confiscation to settle the evils which were the foundation of agrarian unrest.

Datu Ryan's colorful method was perfect, but Datu Ryan was not at hand, and Barstow saw no moral equivalent of that fantastic man's remedy. Barstow had but one play left. He had little time, for Puyat and Weyler were set to run out at the first sign of real trouble.

And now the Huks debated the surrender ultimatum. Their conclusion did not surprise Barstow: "They warn us, those fellows, because they're afraid to come in and get us! A pack of old women! We'll have plenty of cartridges when we take theirs away!"

Puyat and Weyler knew better, as would anyone whose experience included more than tilling fields; but the more confidence the Huks had, the easier it would be for their chiefs to slip out with that leather bag which Puyat never let beyond arm's reach.

And when, without warning, there came a crackle of musketry, the ferocious yelling of Moros advancing under cover, the hollow brazen booming war drums, Barstow had no longer anything for which to wait. Suspense was over. The moment of decision faced him. He wondered whether he was equal to doing the only thing which could possibly beat Puyat and Weyler. He drew a deep breath, then called, "Wait a minute, all of you! You're perfectly safe! Never mind running for cover. You can't get away unless I tell you how to do it."

He stood there, arms folded. Though there weren't enough stray bullets to make his position dangerous, the risk was real enough for the Huks to eye him.

A *balud* dropped from a tree. Barstow picked the pigeon up, hefted it, and said to Weyler, "Nice for lunch. That one in a million shot, clipping a bird's neck without taking off the head. Hey, you, Puyat, come out of that grass, there won't be any more pigeons dropping. It can't happen again for a long time."

The two came from cover. They flashed Barstow a murderous glance. They were right, everyone had been right in diving for shelter, yet Barstow had put sensible precaution in an evil light. When someone chuckled, Weyler turned mulberry red.

"There's only one way to get out of this," Barstow told them. "Grab these two fellows and turn them over to the Moros. Buy your own hides. They sold you. There's no ammunition because all the boxes in the arsenal back in Santa Rosa were full of sand, no cartridges, but fine beach sand. Your ten pesos a head bought sand, that's why there are ten bullets coming

your way for every one going the other way."

And now that he had said it, he had only to wait and see whether they'd believe, or whether Puyat's guard would first cut him down.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ROGUES' MARCH

MORO drums boomed. The sound was deceptive, seeming to come first from one direction, then from another. The outposts, snapping at the bait, blazed away, wasting more and more ammunition.

Barstow, following up the shock of his words, told the Huks, "Amboluto's waiting for the cartridges to be used up, then he's coming in to settle it hand to hand. Because this man Puyat had kept Amboluto's daughter as a personal pet instead of sending her back with apologies. You paid for a lot of his women, and for his nice car, only you paid in cash. This time, you pay with your hides."

"The arsenal blew up!" Weyler declared.

"Pretty thin explosion," Barstow retorted. "If any of you fellows live through this, dig in the wreck and see the boxes of sand."

Puyat yelled to his personal guard, and reached for his gun.

That would have ended it; but several of the less severely wounded were on their feet, and close at hand. Though none had ammunition, and only a few had kept their rifles, they rushed between Barstow and Puyat before a shot could be fired.

"Get back!" Puyat yelled, and Weyler snarled, "Get back, you blockheads, he's a spy, he's one of the enemy."

The guards lowered their rifles, and looked bewildered. Turning on wounded comrades went against the grain. Puyat kept his pistol leveled. Weyler knew better than to draw. He said, calmly, "Put that gun away! All of you, take it easy. Are you going to believe a landlord?"

"When he doctors us, yes," one declared, stubbornly. And another, "If that arsenal couldn't explode louder than it did, it must have been empty. It should have been full, I carried lots of cases into it, what happened?"

"Show us what's in the suitcase, Puyat!" Barstow demanded. "Before we run, let's divide the wealth."

This was a bluff to keep the enemy thinking. One of the wounded hobbled over and grabbed for the case. Puyat cursed, turned, and fired.

The nearest of his own guards knocked him down with a rifle butt. Weyler, now a sickly yellowish-gray, tried to back away, but could not. The wounded man, unhit by the pistol shot, slashed at the leather with a dagger. He tore out hastily packed shirts and underwear; and then, wads of banknotes. They were all of low denomination. They could hardly be Puyat's treasure chest, but their presence damned the organizer.

Steel flashed. Barstow said, "Wait! We've got other things to do. Tie those fellows, we can use them to buy our hides."

The firing now came from east, west, and north. Pacífico, watching the Huks lash their one-time chiefs together, back to back, shook his head. "Amboluto's men have us from three sides, what good does this do us now?" he asked. "When it is every man for himself, who has a chance to surrender?"

"You're not far from right," Barstow had to admit. "And if Amina did get to her own people, she couldn't stop a clean-up, not even if she wanted to."

"You've got your men," Pacífico said, "but you can't go far with them. And these fellows are wondering what you can do for them."

Barstow, looking about him, realized that such was the case. The Huks who had lost their leaders wanted a new head to do their thinking. Ortega, grim and worried looking, came from the firing line which was bending back, like a crescent, promising to become a circle. He wanted every man and every gun and every cartridge for a break-through. And when he saw what had happened, he was surprised, though not for long.

"They told me," he said to Barstow, "that you were a guerrilla."

"That's right."

"An important one."

"I came through. Well, *Señor Coronel,* it is clear that you are a soldier. We trust you."

Ortega made a helpless gesture. "This is no soldier's business. Nothing but guerrilla tricks can get us out of this."

"Maybe not even that," Barstow answered. "We can't hold out, and you know what'll happen if you make it every man for himself!"

"We'll be wiped out a few at a time. What do you think?"

"Make a deal with the Moros. See if they'll settle for some guns and our two wealth sharers, particularly Puyat."

"We can do without either of them, *señor,*" Ortega said bitterly. "Be pleased to come up with me. They may listen to you. After all, you tried to help that woman, and you're not one of us."

"I'll try it," Barstow said, as he followed the farmer-colonel. "If I have anything that'll do the job, I'll share it with you fellows. But it won't be as easy as sharing the wealth."

Ortega cursed in a soft, fierce voice. "I wish that fool of a Carag were right up in the middle of all this!"

"Soon as he's sold his gold mine," Barstow blithely said, "he'll come back to divvy up. You can depend on it."

THEY were crawling toward a line of combat groups which faced the heaviest of the Moro fire when Ortega paused for a moment to size things up. The forest was thinning. Ahead was a burnt-over area, dotted here and there with clumps of *lauan*, and islands of bamboo. Patches of ground showed signs of having been tilled, a few seasons past. Several gullies raked the level stretch. But for the booming of gongs, and the bullets which whined and smacked and popped, there was no sign of an enemy. The Huks were being sewed up by masters of bushwhacking.

"And they've got all the ammunition in the world!"

"Sounds like it," Barstow agreed. "Though that's not odd. They're saving the Military Police a lot of trouble, aren't they?" Seeing Ortega's change of expression made Barstow continue, "If there'd been more talk about sharing the brains and less about sharing the wealth, you fellows would've known better than to grab Moro women!"

Another dash, and the two were with the skirmishers. Barstow tied Weyler's shirt to a stick, and waited for "Cease firing!" to be passed along the line. The invisible enemy still blazed away. A plane circled, but no messages dropped. Barstow saw understanding harden the faces of the Huk riflemen. There was no point to demand the surrender of men who would be liquidated to settle a feud.

"All right," Ortega prompted.

Barstow raised the short staff and wigwagged. The blanketing fire centered about him. The skirmishers rolled and wriggled away from him. Barstow lowered the flag.

"They don't understand."

Ortega spat. "They remember Jap flags of truce."

Barstow tried again. He drew another volley. A shot clipped the staff, knocking it from his hand. "That makes it simple," Ortega said, calmly. "I know now what we have to do."

Barstow shook his head. "We can't pull out. You haven't the ammunition, you haven't the trained men you need for covering a retreat."

"So you say, let's attack, it's better than running?"

"I would, if we had Japs in front of us. Got a smoke?"

Ortega dug a cigar from his pocket. Barstow bit off the tip, but did not light the smoke. "Now grab me a rifle, a belt and pistol, and the biggest bolo or machete you can lay hands on."

The farmer-colonel gave him a queer look, muttered something halfway between prayer and blasphemy, and crawled down the line toward the men who had put distance between

"Riley Grannan's Last Adventure"

This is the classic of funeral sermons—the sermon delivered in a burlesque theater in Rawhide, Nevada, by Herman W. Knickerbocker, the busted preacher-prospector, over the body of Riley Grannan, the dead-broke gambler.

ADVENTURE has ordered a large reprint of this famous booklet. Now available at ten cents a copy.

Adventure
205 East 42nd Street
New York 17, N. Y.

Please send me.....copies of "Riley Grannan's Last Adventure." I am enclosing.....cents. (10c in stamps or coin for each copy desired.)

.....
Name

.....
Street Address

.....
City or Town State

themselves and the dangerous flag of truce. When he came back with the weapons, he asked, "Are you going *jurmentado?*"

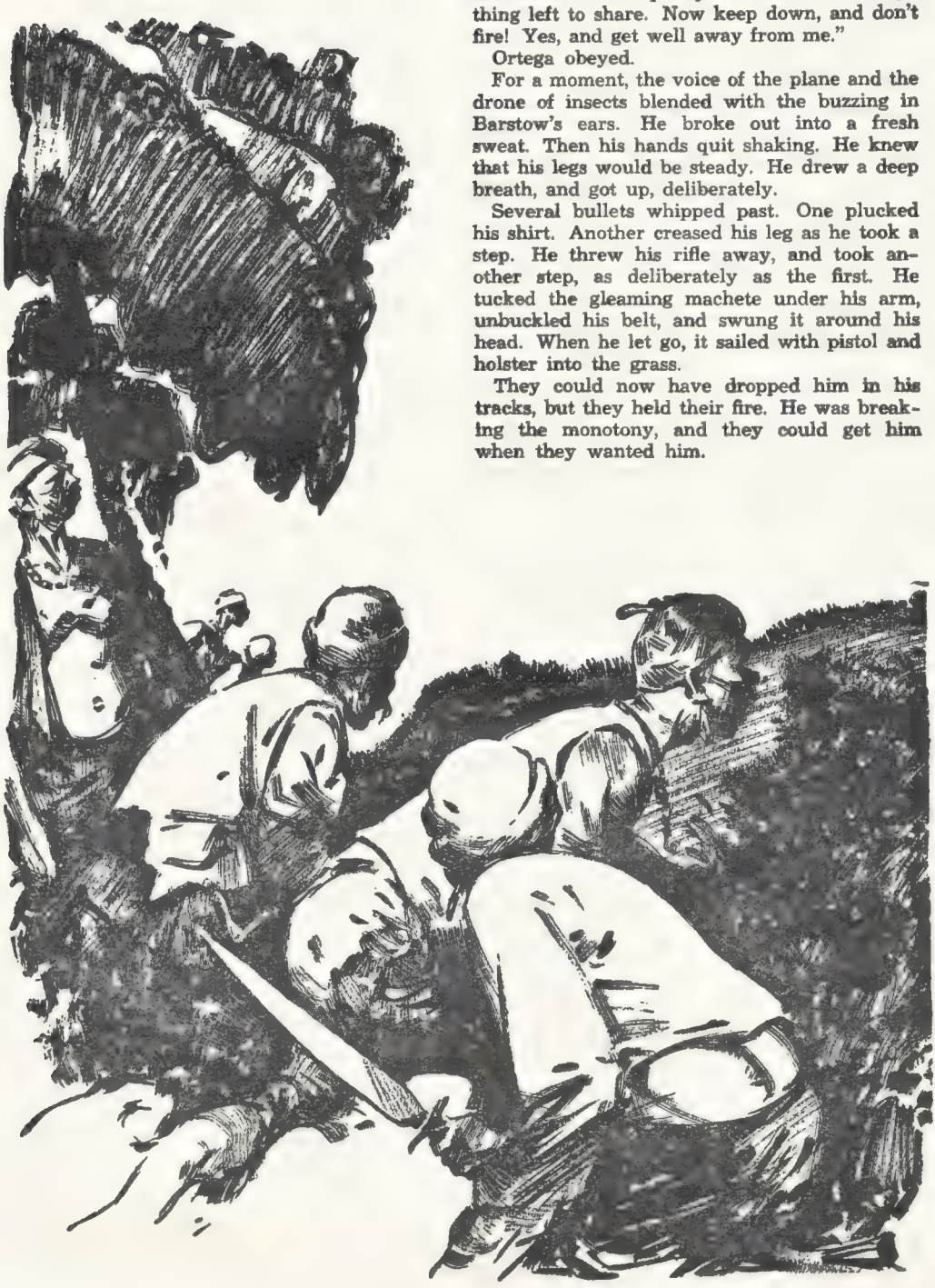
Barstow shook his head. "If this doesn't work, the next move is up to you. I won't have anything left to share. Now keep down, and don't fire! Yes, and get well away from me."

Ortega obeyed.

For a moment, the voice of the plane and the drone of insects blended with the buzzing in Barstow's ears. He broke out into a fresh sweat. Then his hands quit shaking. He knew that his legs would be steady. He drew a deep breath, and got up, deliberately.

Several bullets whipped past. One plucked his shirt. Another creased his leg as he took a step. He threw his rifle away, and took another step, as deliberately as the first. He tucked the gleaming machete under his arm, unbuckled his belt, and swung it around his head. When he let go, it sailed with pistol and holster into the grass.

They could now have dropped him in his tracks, but they held their fire. He was breaking the monotony, and they could get him when they wanted him.



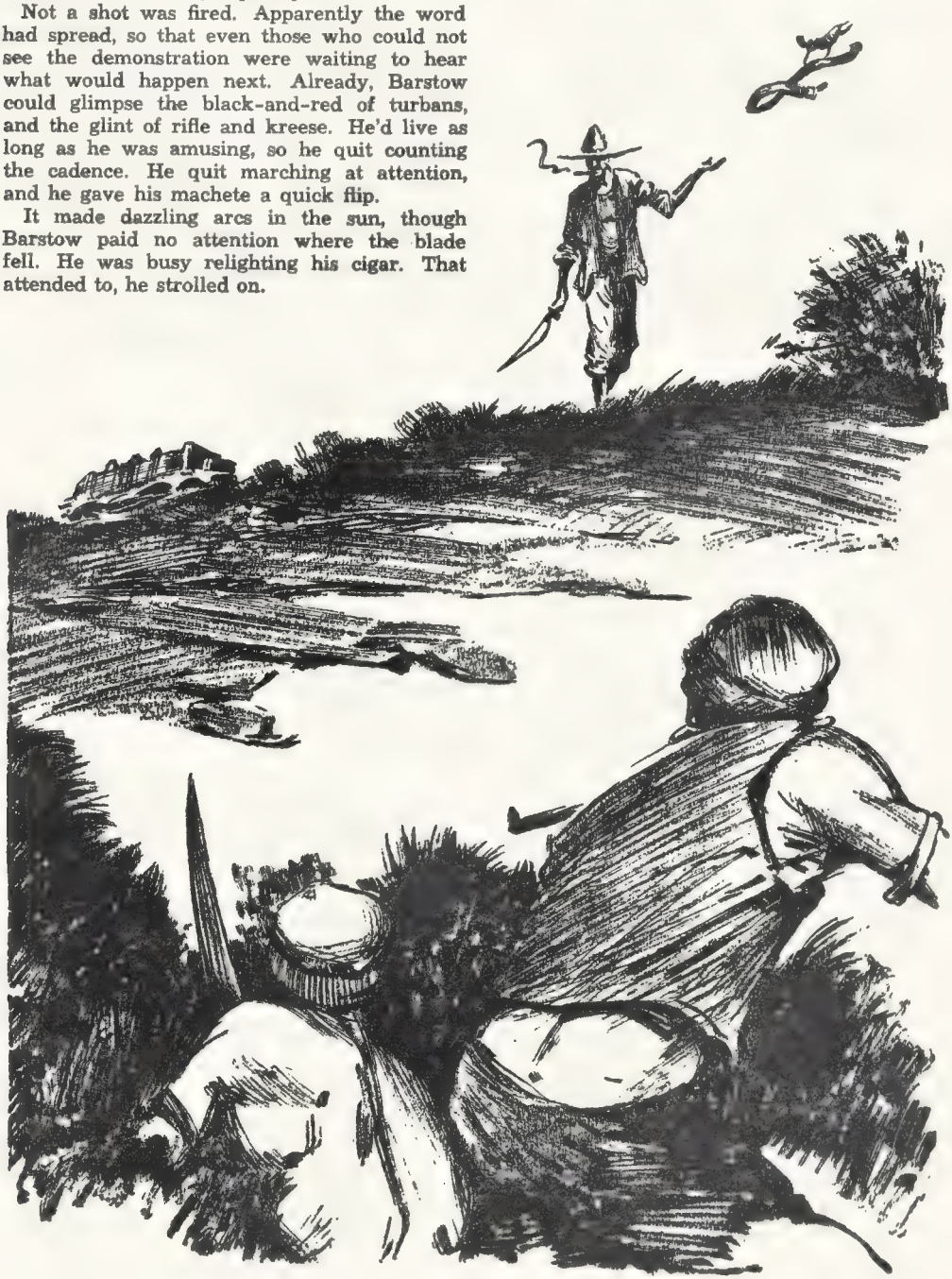
He struck several matches before he got his cigar going.

Still no shooting.

Puffing a smoke screen, Barstow advanced. He held the machete at the carry. As he marched, he counted, "ONE two three four, ONE two three four, *hup! hup!*"

Not a shot was fired. Apparently the word had spread, so that even those who could not see the demonstration were waiting to hear what would happen next. Already, Barstow could glimpse the black-and-red of turbans, and the glint of rifle and kreese. He'd live as long as he was amusing, so he quit counting the cadence. He quit marching at attention, and he gave his machete a quick flip.

It made dazzling arcs in the sun, though Barstow paid no attention where the blade fell. He was busy relighting his cigar. That attended to, he strolled on.



He unbuckled his belt, swung it around his head and let go . . . it sailed with pistol and holster into the grass.

TURBANED men wearing jodhpur-style pants popped up from cover, right in front of him. Then, from the fringe of the forest behind these men came a girl whose face and voice gave Barstow unexpected help, and when he most needed it.

Amina spoke to the men in their own language, and then said in English, "When I heard what was happening, I was sure you were on the way."

He ignored her, and said to the riflemen, "Tell Datu Amboluto I want to see him."

At the approach of his men, Amboluto got out of his command car, a jeep with a yellow canopy. He wore a red skullcap, horn-rimmed glasses, and a khaki uniform. Instead of sash and kreese, he had web belt and service automatic. The dumpy, sharp-eyed little man reminded Barstow of a pudding, though there was nothing soft about his mouth. His handshake was American style.

"I'm glad you came over. My daughter told me about you."

Barstow's eyes shifted to the *datu's* Navy binoculars. "Someone recognized me?"

Amboluto shook his head. "No. But when you got up, and the first volley didn't hit you, my men thought you had gone *jurmentado,* which interested them. The custom is dying out among us, you know. Anyway, watching was more fun than shooting.

"Then they thought that your throwing away your guns meant you were coming to challenge one of us to a duel with swords." The *datu* nodded appreciatively. "Naturally, they didn't want to spoil anything as interesting as all that."

"It wouldn't have lasted long enough to be interesting, *datu.* I was afraid someone would get that idea, so I threw my machete away. The truth is, I came to talk things over."

Amboluto spoke to a retainer, who got two bottles of coke from a bucket. The *datu* offered Barstow a drink, and an American cigarette. "Sit down, you look tired. You're among friends," he said. "I'll have things in hand very quickly."

"That's what brought me here. You've done a good deal of damage to the Huks. They're farmers, not fighting men. They fell into the hands of thieves—"

Amboluto made a brusque gesture. "I understand all that. But they came into our territory and kidnaped some women. What can I do but wipe them out? My men expect it. Where would I be if I went against custom?"

Amina, who had come nearer to listen, tore ettiquette to ribbons by interposing. "What's the sense of sending me to the States to learn how to be a lady, if you're going to act pre-war?"

Amboluto's face darkened. "You've caused enough trouble already!"

Barstow said, "The old customs are good enough for me. Do you want to settle this on a pre-war basis?"

"The idea is interesting, but I don't think you can give me anything really new."

"Maybe I can." Barstow took a drink of coke. "What happened is this: Before I came over, I told the Huks how they'd been sold out, and how the organizers had pocketed every peso in the treasury, instead of buying ammunition. So they have two of them tied up. Weyler, an American renegade. Puyat, the chap your daughter dislikes. You've fought enough to satisfy your honor, so it's perfectly proper to take an indemnity and let the rest of the Huks go back to their work. They'll turn over fifty rifles, and Weyler, and Puyat."

But the *datu* was not interested.

"My daughter told me they were almost out of ammunition. Why trade, when we can go in and take all?"

"Weyler and Puyat might get away," Barstow pointed out, though with lessening confidence. "And they're the two you want."

"We'll take all. Why are you so interested?"

"One of my men is back there."

"Go and get him. You're welcome to tell the Huks to start running, we'll settle them anyway."

"There is more to it than just saving Pacífico. I want those Huks to go home and tell what kind of leaders they had, and why they failed. They're Filipinos, just as you Moros are. If you hunt them down and wipe them out, you'll be making the clash between Moslems and Christians all the worse. But you'll be making

The dumpy little datu *reminded Barstow of a pudding.*

things better for everyone if you let those fellows go back to their work knowing that running wild, and swallowing the bait thrown out by agitators isn't the way to improve things for themselves."

"Have another coke," Amboluto said, amiably. "Then go to your friend and—"

As he listened, Barstow was thinking, *"Well, I tried. I've saved my own hide, and I've got the two prime stinkers were they belong, but—"*

The clang of brazen gongs cut into both speech and thought. The sound came from the thinly held jungle. Bugles brayed. The "Rogues' March" rang across the clearing. The Moro riflemen, who had been chewing and spitting during the conference, began to chatter and point. Amboluto raised his field glasses and exclaimed, "Datu Ryan!"

And then Barstow saw the mad sultan ride into view. Trumpeters preceded him. Policemen twirling clubs flanked him. Naked admirals *tweet-tweeted* bosun's whistles. Nothing was missing except the royal barge and the four dark queens.

RYAN dismounted some yards from Amboluto, and advanced afoot. The handshake was Moro. and ceremonial. That done, he turned to Barstow, and slapped him on the back, and laughed until the parrots protested. "I got the sons of ———!" he howled. "The both of them, and the treasury, too, while you fellows were arguing."

"Uh—where'd you come from?" Barstow demanded; and then he saw Andrés and understood what had happened to the man who had disappeared in the bombing of Puyat's sedan.

"Yes, I am not knocked cold, I run like hell to talk to Datu Ryan," Andrés explained. "So we come to get you, and the money which I tell about."

Ryan was enjoying the palaver with his in-law. After some moments, he said to Barstow, "Datu Amboluto says he first thought you were going *jurmentado*, then that you were going to challenge him to duel, and then that you were plumb crazy. But saving the surviving Huks makes good sense, and I'm the guy that can do it.'"

Datu Amboluto smiled sourly. "He is right. We are blood brothers. He came to save my daughter. How can I now fight with him for taking the loot?"

Ryan chuckled. "I am not taking the loot. I am sharing the wealth, if you let the Huks turn over their guns and go home." He winked at Barstow. "The poor devils are tired of hukking around. If the Angel Gabriel tried to organize them, they'd run him out of camp."

Datu Amboluto said, hopefully, "Share the wealth? May your generosity never grow less! Allah loves the generous!"

"That is right," Ryan declared, magnificently. "That is what I said, and that is what I mean—I am sharing my prizes. You may take Weyler and Puyat, they're yours to do with as you please, and never mind how small the pieces. I keep their treasury. Barstow gets the honor of giving the general a complete report on the Huk situation, and then he also gets his rubber plantation back again."

Amboluto tried bravely to look pleased. "Allah will reward you! You are too generous. So, let me give you something. Something very nice."

Ryan beamed. "Being liberal myself, I am not surprised that you are. What is it you're offering me?"

"It is not offered, it is given, and with my blessing." Amboluto beckoned, and Amina stepped forward; whereupon he said, "My daughter, she has always wanted to marry an American. You are just the man. An American, yet one of us. You will be good to her, but still keep her from too many foreign ways She is yours."

Amina smiled, fluttered her long eyelashes, and said, "I was educated in a convent."

"That has its points," Ryan admitted, regarding her with unfeigned admiration which was nevertheless diluted with the feeling that Datu Amboluto hadn't fared so badly after all in the declaring of dividends. "You're a sweet girl, and if you're as quick-thinking as your father—"

She nodded, and said, brightly, "I'll get along, Eric, I'm not the least worried about whether your other ladies will like me."

"That's precisely what I was thinking about," Ryan said, and signaled the trumpeters, who blew "Recall."

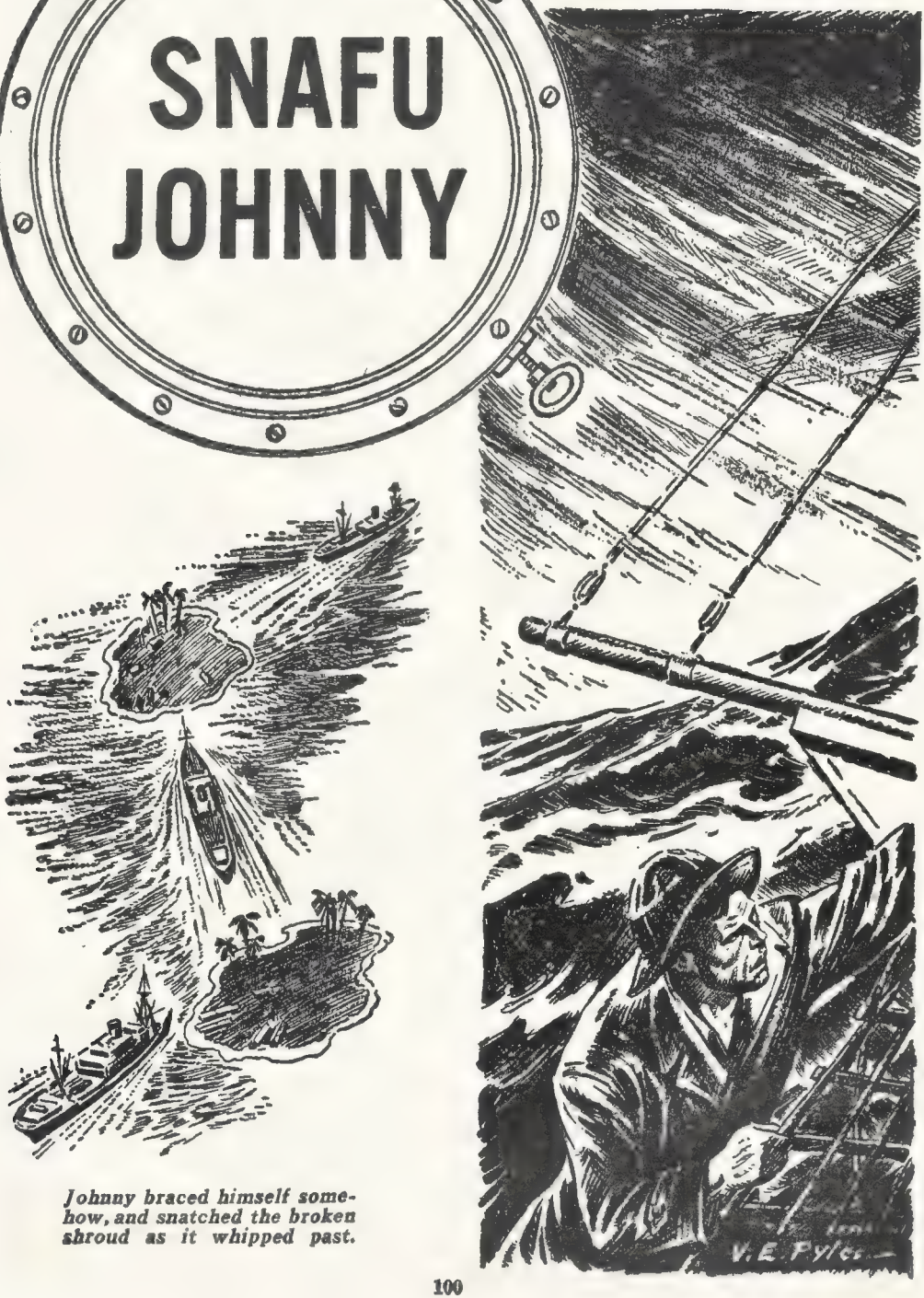
Amina, as befitted a Moro lady, followed a few yards behind Ryan's cantankerous little stallion. Barstow grabbed a latigo strap, and walked alongside. He said, under cover of the bugles, "You might've had 'em sound off, *'Here Comes the Bride', datu.* She would really appreciate—"

Ryan whispered, fiercely, "You're an ungrateful, yellow-bellied coward or you'd've given me some competition. I couldn't say no, and there'll be the devil to pay, at home, and four wives is all a Moslem is allowed!"

Barstow grinned. "Seems to me you once told me, when I was in a jam, that a man is born alone, and he dies alone. Well, he can't expect an assistant when it comes to marrying another wife, can he? And if you were an orthodox Moslem, you wouldn't swill that gun-barrel gin. You and Amboluto both got dividends. All I got and all I want is my plantation, and maybe what's left of that case of Scotch the general won't have time to drink before he gets my report on how serious the Huk situation is."

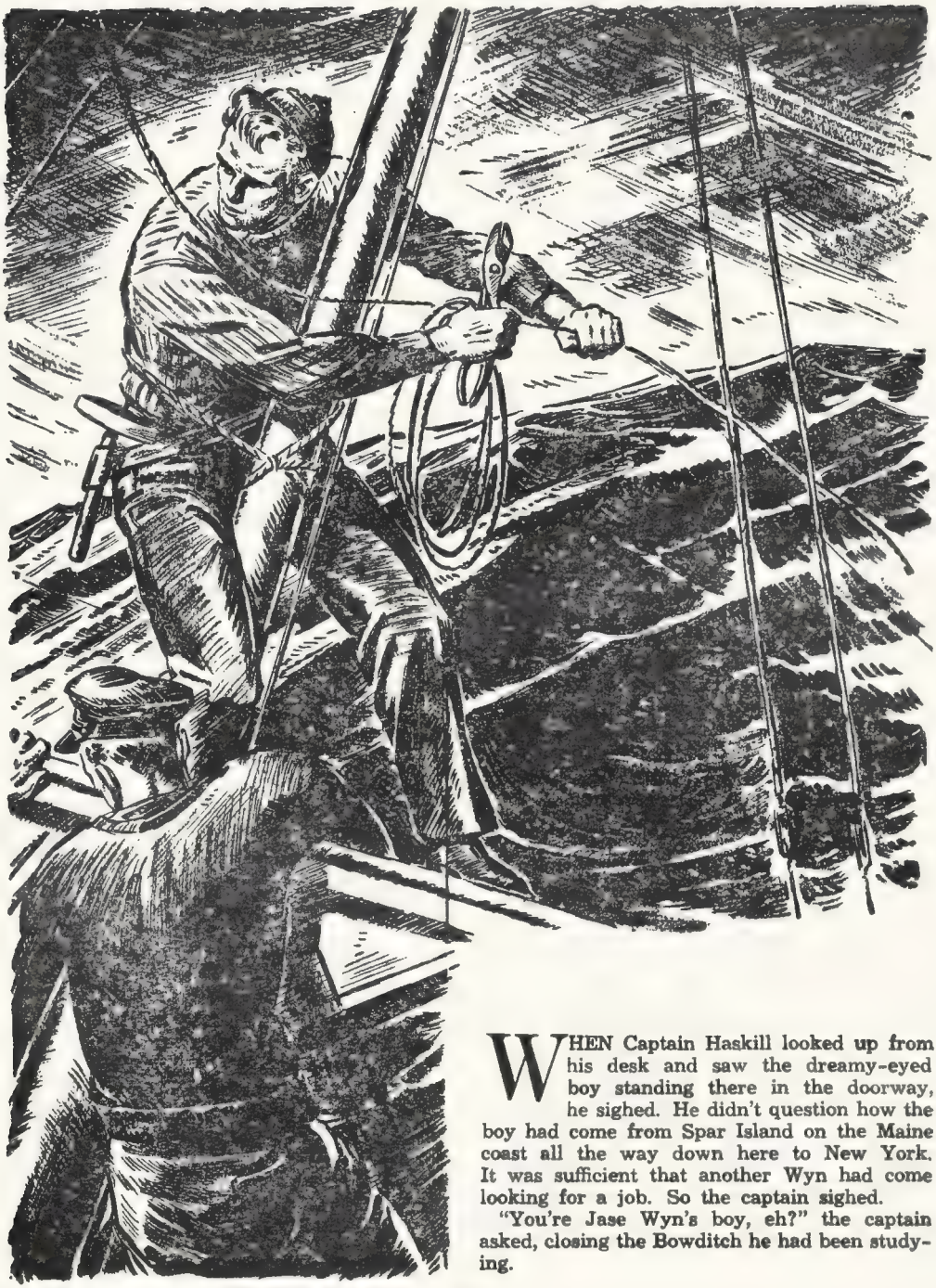
SNAFU JOHNNY

ILLUSTRATED BY
V. E. PYLES



Johnny braced himself somehow, and snatched the broken shroud as it whipped past.

By FRANCIS GOTT



WHEN Captain Haskill looked up from his desk and saw the dreamy-eyed boy standing there in the doorway, he sighed. He didn't question how the boy had come from Spar Island on the Maine coast all the way down here to New York. It was sufficient that another Wyn had come looking for a job. So the captain sighed.

"You're Jase Wyn's boy, eh?" the captain asked, closing the Bowditch he had been studying.

"That's right, sir," the boy answered in a soft voice. "Pa thought as how I was old enough to go to sea, me begging him for a year now. They ain't nothing like the sea, sir."

"No, there's nothing quite like the sea, Johnny," the old captain agreed, soberly. "You're about sixteen, now, eh, son?"

"That's right, sir." The boy's blue eyes were eager. "But Ma give me a letter with hers and pa's permission writ on it."

"And your pa wants you to ship out with me?"

"That's right, sir."

Captain Haskill rubbed his craggy face, while memories of other Wyns winked like little lights in the depths of his brown eyes. He looked out of the porthole upon the massed shipping of New York harbor and the memories grews stronger. The Wyns never made good sailors. He'd shipped out a lot of them, Spar Island being his own home town, and he knew. The Wyns were likeable men, it was true; big boned and dreamy eyed and easy going, but not one had ever made a sailor, try hard as he might.

So Captain Haskill came to the conclusion that the best thing to do was to pay Johnny's fare back home. However, Johnny looked at him and at his big ship with so many illusions about the sea shining in his big eyes that he didn't have the heart to send him home. Instead, he pulled a few strings, and got Johnny signed on.

That first day, even though it was mid-winter and bitterly cold and the wind tore down the Hudson River and the East River and joined forces at the tip of Brooklyn and drove a thousand icy needles through one's clothes to the very bone, Captain Haskill came out on deck from time to time to watch Johnny Wyn. Yes, Johnny was another Wyn, he saw, and the old captain was greatly troubled by doubts of his wisdom at having signed Johnny on.

Johnny was mighty willing, washing paint and greasing winches and stowing away ice sheathed lines. He worked like two men, rangy body always moving with never a let-up, not even to wipe his nose or tuck the wisps of tow hair back under his earlappers. Yet it all meant very little; for everything Johnny did had to be done over, and he got in the men's way until at last, patience strained to the breaking point, they began to swear at him and call him Snafu Johnny.

So Captain Haskill went into his warm cabin, stripped the heavy bridgecoat from his great frame, and sighed wearily. Perhaps, after all, he'd better send Johnny home. He considered this possibility with reluctance, and he felt real bad.

Then the mate came and added to the weight of the captain's doubts.

"That new ordinary seaman, sir," the mate coughed, "Johnny Wyn. I think we ought'er let 'im go, before he does some damage to ship or crew or even to himself. He's green, sir, I know, and it takes time for a green hand to catch on, but this lad seems to be greeener'n usual, sir. In fact, he's pretty awful."

"Is he willing, Mr. Johnson?"

The mate hesitated, honest features working to his thoughts. "Yes, sir, as willing a lad as I ever handled, but he just don't seem to have what it takes, sir."

Neither by word nor gesture did Captain Haskill give away the doubts that rode him. The mate was new to the ship, and Captain Haskill had been new to her but two trips previously; so no one on shipboard knew about those other Wyns and Captain Haskill, loving and respecting the men of his home town, would never let on.

So he said, gruffly, realizing that here was an issue, "As long as the lad's willing, Mister, we'll give him a chance."

The mate's broad face became quite red and his stocky body sagged, as he said, "All right, sir. I'll do the best I can."

THE mate left, discouraged. Captain Haskill felt sorry for him. He knew what the mate was up against, and felt queasy that it was his doing that an added burden had been thrust upon him, but Johnny came from the captain's own home town and would get his chance. The captain shook his head, wearily. He knew the mate had plenty of troubles as it was, getting the ship back into proper order out of the terrible mess the war mates had left her in.

Then, late that night, as Captain Haskill was getting ready for bed, Johnny came to him. The boy's lean face was white as he pulled a mitten from a hand that was wrapped in a bloody handkerchief.

"What happened, Johnny?" Captain Haskill asked, real concerned.

"Perhaps I shouldn't have done it, sir," Johnny choked, hanging his head, ashamed. "But after I got to bed I got to thinkin' about what the bosun told one of the A. B.'s—that if the winches weren't stripped of the wire runners, and the steam cracked a bit to set the drums to turnin', that they'd freeze up and bust before mornin'."

The captain's seamed face creased in a worried frown. If those winches had been neglected—

"So I got to thinkin'," Johnny went on, "that the mate and bosun had gone home for the night, and that the A. B., Denby, who'd supposed to 'tend to the winches, had gone, too. I got to wonderin' about them winches, sir, wonderin' if the A. B.'d forgot 'em."

Captain Haskill, listening carefully, filled his wash basin with hot water, and opened his medicine chest.

"I couldn't go to sleep in peace, sir." Johnny winced when the captain took his injured hand. "So I got out of my bunk, got dressed and went out on deck. Well, the A. B.'d forgot to take care of the winches. Don't know as I blame him, we was all mixed up with so much to square away at quittin' time. Anyway, maybe I shouldn't have done it, sir, without orders, but I stripped 'em all, all ten cargo winches, and got 'em to turnin', and also the windlass and the big winch back aft. It took me a couple of hours, sir."

Johnny looked at his bloody hand, swallowed and continued, "I wisht I'd had someone to help me, it being awful lonesome and cold, and me not knowin' much about the winches, havin' to puzzle 'em out and all, just knowin' what I learned today while greasin' 'em. But 'bout everyone's ashore, I guess. 'Twas the big winch on the poop that I got caught in, sir, and I guess I lost a finger. Served me right, I guess."

Captain Haskill looked up from the medicine chest and he viewed Johnny as if he looked upon a miracle. No other Wyn had ever had brains enough to give thought beyond an immediate order; and here Johnny Wyn had acted even better than the officer material that came from the school ships.

Getting up from his knees after rummaging in the medicine chest, Captain Haskill opened the port, shoved his face against the cold and looked down upon the forward well deck, dark and shadowy except for a reddish glow that came from a passing tug. Sure enough, he could hear the winches wheezing with escaping steam and the drums turning and at the right speed, too, by the sound. He turned to Johnny and his eyes gleamed with respect and he shook his white head at the wonder of it all.

Making out that he didn't notice the tears that winked in Johnny's eyes, he took off the bloody handkerchief and lifted the boy's hand close. It was the left hand and a bloody mess.

Now Captain Haskill came of the old school. He'd served his apprenticeship in sail when tall ships were many months upon the sea between ports. He'd nursed many a man through fevers and loathsome diseases and what not. He'd amputated arms and legs, and had even saved a ship's carpenter's life once by performing an appendectomy. So there was no hesitation on his part now. He plunged the hand into the hot water, washed away the gore, and inspected it and felt of the smashed finger.

"Johnny," he declared, soberly, "that finger will have to come off. A shame, you being so young. I feel partly responsible."

Johnny nodded, stiff-lipped. "Whatever you think best, sir."

"It will hurt."

"I can stand it, sir."

Captain Haskill took a sharp surgical knife from among others in a small case. He sterilized it and lifted Johnny's hand. Johnny's eyes, blue pools of trust in his captain and moiling with illusions of the sea, watched Captain Haskill's face.

Suddenly, he said, "Losin' that finger, sir, on my first day on shipboard sort of binds me'n the sea together. Ain't nothin' the sea can do now to scare me, sir."

Captain Haskill stared at Johnny, and then nodded, slowly. "If that's the way you think, Johnny, it will be so."

He cut the flesh to the bone, from the second joint down each side of the pulpy finger. The knife made a slight, sickening sound like ripping linen. Johnny grew white from pain. Captain Haskill had a glass of water ready with a white powder mixed in it. He thrust the glass to Johnny's pinched lips and Johnny drank.

Then Captain Haskill sliced back the two pieces of flesh from the bone and cut the crushed bone off at the second joint. He snipped the surplus flesh away, sterilized the raw flesh and sewed it together across the joint. A few seconds later the finger was bandaged. It had been a quick yet effective job.

"Well, I'll get back to my bunk now," Johnny said, shakily. "Thank you, sir."

CAPTAIN HASKILL let Johnny go, for he knew the Wyns were a tough tribe. However, he stepped out upon the deck and watched Johnny enter the safety of the crew's quarters back aft. Then he entered his own quarters, cleaned up the mess and locked his medicine chest. After that, he sat down in the big armchair beside the radiator and, warm and comfortable, listened to the steam gurgle in the pipes and the ships tooting out in the river.

He thought of his wife and his children and his grandchildren, so far away and safe and snug on Spar Island in the big house he had provided for them so long ago. He thought of the Wyns, of all the Wyn men who had sailed under him over the long years, none of them lasting more than a trip or two. They'd failed, each one, and had gladly returned to their lobster pots and their fishing. Not a one had stuck it out to become a real seaman.

This was to be his last trip. After that he'd be retired and would return home to enjoy his family. Somehow, he thought it fitting that a Wyn would sail under him this last time. If only he could make a sailor out of

Johnny; it didn't seem fitting, somehow, that all those others Wyns had failed. Yet he had his doubts, strong doubts, that Johnny ever would make a sailor. Likely, he'd be fired and have to return home. True, he'd stacked up well in taking care of the winches tonight, but his clumsiness in losing a finger had far outweighed it all. A Wyn trait. Captain Haskill sighed and went to bed.

The next morning as the mighty skyscrapers of Manhattan were silhouetted stark and cold and gray against the dawn light, Captain Haskill stood upon the bridge beside the pilot and the third mate and watched his great ship being pulled and bunted out into the stream by the tugboats. A deep feeling of contentment, albeit mixed with sadness, lay heavily upon him; for he felt keenly the fact that this was to be the last time that he'd ever take a ship to sea. His great lungs drew in the cold air, sorting out the tantalizing smells of New York from the spicy and oily and woody smells of the ship herself.

He turned to look aft, then, and espied Johnny on the poopdeck, helping haul in the lines. The nigger heads on the winch were turning, gripping the lines, and snaking them out of the water, all dripping and freezing, and pulling them in through the chocks to be flaked and coiled upon the deck. Johnny was only working with one hand, of course; but Captain Haskill was gladdened at seeing him there and the sadness left him and a peculiar aching stab went through him just as if Johnny were his own boy.

Then the tugs were cast off and the ship steamed on down the Narrows and Ambrose Channel to the open sea. The pilot was dropped, and the ship was on her own now, blunt bow rising and falling and bunting through the long swells. At last the land dropped from sight and the ship was a world within a world churning through the ever moving sea.

Captain Haskill stayed a long time on the bridge, wrapped up in his memories and breathing in the sweetness of the spray-swept air. Finally he became conscious of the cold, and decided he'd better get into the warm pilothouse, or, better still, go down into his cabin and ring for the mess boy to bring him a cup of steaming coffee.

First, however, he looked the ship over from stem to stern. He noted with satisfaction that the A. B.'s, under the direction of the bosun, were dumping and shoveling garbage and broken dunnage over the side, and lowering the booms into their collars and stripping them of gear. Johnny was there, too, eager and willing, but like a ball and chain to his mates. Captain Haskill shook his head dubiously. Poor Johnny!

Then he lifted his powerful binoculars to inspect the masts and rigging and wireless antenna. The *Merrydew* was a very old ship and there were parts of her that the captain didn't trust too much. As the foretopmast moved close to him under the power of the glasses, he stiffened. That foretopmast! Yes, it had a crack in it, low down where it was attached to the foretop. A bad crack, too. Bad! Bad! That upper mast supported the heavy weight of the wireless antenna, thick copper wires, hung double and spread by spanners. If that foretopmast should give way in a bad blow—

The captain shook his head and went below.

THE days were logged off, one by by one, and the ship fell into the drowsy and timeless routine of watch following watch. However, the captain found that this trip was not quite like any other trip. When he wasn't thinking about Johnny Wyn he was watching him working about the decks, and hoping against hope that Johnny would make a sailor.

And so the warm and weed-strewn waters of the Gulf Stream were crossed and the scattered islands of the Azores passed and the cold weather was left far behind in northern latitudes. Johnny Wyn spilled paint on the ladders, gouged a teak railing in scraping it free of old varnish and dropped a steel block on a man's head.

The mate came to the captain, wearing an injured air. "That Snafu Johnny, now—"

The captain nodded, looking from the navigation bridge down upon the forward well deck and hiding the grief that cut him. Johnny was becoming more and more a definite issue. The captain liked the mate, but it irritated him that the mate was down on Johnny so. After all, bad as Johnny was, he was a green hand. However, Captain Haskill didn't become discouraged; if the worst came to the worst, and the mate cut up too much about Johnny, why—he had a trump card he'd lay down before the mate.

"Don't spare the boy," the captain bade, meeting the mate's blond stare. "Give him a try at all the work. Break him in good. His finger is healing fast, and it won't hurt him any to work with the one hand and favor the other. If he's ever to be a sailor, Mister, he's got to learn to work one-handed."

The mate coughed and nodded, a dubious twist to his weathered lips.

Now Captain Haskill knew how to smooth a man's ruffled feelings when need be. So he dangled a grave compliment before the mate, and meant it. He nodded down at the open door to the storeroom under the forecastle head, gaping wide in the sunlight, and said, "Yesterday I noticed you sitting down there on the hatch, splicing a new stay for the smokestack. A neat job, Mister, and done

across your knees, too. Not one seafaring man in a hundred, I cal'ate, knows how to splice wire properly. I never learned."

The mate's ruddy face lighted up and his blue eyes glowed with pride and gratification. "A sailor don't learn to splice wire, sir, as there's seldom the need. I learned the trade in a shipyard, sir, three years rigging. Splicing wire don't come easy, sir. There's a knack to it that takes weeks and even months of steady splicing to learn, sir, rolling the marlingspike, and cutting the wire in with the tip, sir, and taking the right turn out of the strands before tucking, sir."

"Yes, I noticed what a quick and neat job you did, Mister. Rigging's a trade in a class by itself."

The mate nodded, greatly pleased.

"I wonder if you'd let Johnny take a crack at it, Mister," the captain suggested. "Push him, Mister, and you won't be sorry."

The mate's face fell, "I'll do my best, sir."

As the ship rolled on through the greasy swells that swept down from the tricky Bay of Biscay, the captain watched, evenings, from the bridge. He watched Johnny Wyn, night after night in the sunset glow, sitting on number five hatch, struggling with stubborn wire.

The Rock of Gibraltar was reached, signals flashed, and the ship passed on into the Mediterranean, Johnny struggling with the perverse wire. The boy paused only long enough to gaze up at the Rock, awe lighting his face, and then looked down at his work once more.

Captain Haskill, drawn by an irresistible urge as if Johnny were his own boy, left the bridge and passed aft. He stood beside Johnny, gnarled hands gripped behind his broad back, and watched Johnny's long fingers working with the wire.

"How's it coming, Johnny?" he asked, kindly, a smile riding his broad mouth.

"I dunno, sir," Johnny answered, lifting his sweat-drawn face. "Sometimes I think I got it and then it gets away from me. If I could use the vise in the storeroom, sir, it'd be easier, but Mr. Johnson says as how a real rigger has to learn to splice across his knees, sir, anything up to five-eighths or three-quarter inch wire."

The captain nodded in agreement. "Yes, I can see the value of that. I expect there's times and places when a rigger can't lug a vise with him to help him out on the job."

Johnny grinned, pleased to be working under the captain's regard.

Captain Haskill saw that the mate had given Johnny a condemned wire runner to practice on. It was stiff wire, greasy and stubborn, stripped from a winch drum after having had the life just about pulled out of it. However, it would make useful straps for handling cargo, and for taking care of odd jobs about the ship. Johnny had stopped it off with rope yarns, as the mate had shown him, and had cut it into varying lengths with a cold chisel. Already, acting under the mate's instructions, he'd made a thirty-foot grommet strap by using a long splice, and two shorter grommet straps joined by short splices, and several smaller straps with eye splices at each end. The mate had a practical mind.

Now Johnny was working on the eye splice of a two foot strap, the two eyes measured off the right length and turned in and stopped off with rope yarns, ready for the first tucks. The mate's twelve-inch marlingspike splashed flashing gems of color upon the boy's face as the gleaming steel caught the rays of sunset. Johnny gripped the wire with the three sound fingers of his left hand, thumb tucked under at a slant, bandaged finger sticking straight out, while he rolled the marlingspike with his right. His whole body was dripping sweat from his struggle with the stubborn wire.

Yet his eyes shone as he looked up. "It's great to be at sea, sir! The bosun says as how we'll make Malta in a few days, sir. I bet that city is a wonderful sight."

Captain Haskill nodded. With a pang he recalled his own first trip under sail more than a half century before, and of how he had viewed everything through a magic blue light.

"There's never anything quite like a fellow's first trip at sea, Johnny," he agreed.

After that, the captain went amidships, the pang a dull weight within him. Johnny loved the sea. What a shame if he should fail, as those many other Wyns had failed, and be given a bad discharge at the mate's insistence. He would have to return home then. Anyway, Johnny was learning to splice wire, and that was an accomplishment few seamen knew.

ONE gray morning before breakfast, twenty-one days out of New York, the *Merrydew* reached her first port. Off the cliffs of Malta the pilot was picked up, and then the ship steamed on through the narrow entrance into Malta's narrow harbor of Valletta. Captain Haskill looked aft. Sure enough, he saw Johnny standing there on the poopdeck. He was motionless, arms hanging at his sides, as, entranced, lips parted and face shining with wonder and happiness, he stared up at Malta's war torn battlement, marching terrace on terrace to the very sky itself. Malta, unconquerable city of stone, where the very streets mounted step on step to the mighty heights.

Captain Haskill knew how Johnny felt, all the magic, the mystery, the upsurge of boyish emotion at having helped work a great ship across the wide ocean to a foreign land. It was a feeling that Johnny would never experience again, but one that would be with him always.

The *Merrydew* dropped her port anchor and swung about and was tied stern to the dock with Black Sea hawsers, anchor chain drawn taut. Then the lighters came out, filled with Maltese stevedores, active little men, barefooted, who climbed to the decks and jumped into the holds, chattering their ancient tongue. They worked hard, these dark Maltese, pausing only long enough at noon to eat their grapes and dark bread and swallow their wine.

It was then that Johnny dropped the crate, splitting it wide open and injuring a man.

Captain Haskill heard the crash below him in number two hold, and heard the winches racing. Hurriedly, he descended the ladders to the well deck. He saw the mate standing beside the hatch coaming, looking down, blond features darkening with thunder clouds. Johnny stood between the two winches, fearful and ashamed and very quiet.

The captain pushed his way between two groups of excited stevedores and reached the mate's side. He looked down into the hold and groaned. What a mess! And Johnny, no doubt, was responsible.

Down below, at the edge of the between decks, a large crate lay split open, showing a shining new automobile within. Wire runners, double blocked, ran from the wire straps around the crate, up to the cargo booms and down through sheaves to the winch drums. Beside the smashed crate, a wizened stevedore was jumping up and down, screaming, and hanging to his upper arm. Evidently the crate, in falling, had sideswiped him and torn a gash in his arm.

"That Johnny! That damned Snafu Johnny," the mate swore. "I told him over and over how to handle them winches. Instead of taking it slow and easy, lifting with the starboard winch and easing off with the port, he slams on the steam and tries to tear the crate apart. She don't tear, but catches on the underside of the hatch and he tries to lift the whole ship. The runner snaps! That boy'll never make a sailor in a thousand years. Ha!"

Captain Haskill looked at Johnny, heart sore within him. Johnny commenced to tremble, he saw, and the boy's eyes were wet.

"Any green hand's apt to get panicky, Mister," the captain reminded.

"Ar'r!" the mate growled. "I'm through with that boy. The *Ellery's* over there, pulling out this afternoon, homeward bound for the States. I'll see Powers, her mate, and get him to swap me off a good hand for Johnny. Johnny'd better get back home and stay there, for his own good and the good of all concerned. He'll never make a sailor."

Captain Haskill met the mate's stony eyes and the mate's eyes didn't drop. Therefore, the captain knew that the issue was raw between them. He looked across at the *Ellery*, a company ship, and knew that the time had come to play his trump card. To send Johnny home now, in disgrace, just as he had taken his first sip of these foreign lands, would break his heart. No, it must not be done, even if he had to turn Johnny into a mess boy.

So the captain laid his big hand on the mate's shoulder, and said, "Don't do anything about Johnny until I talk to you, Mister. After you've cleaned this mess away, come to my cabin."

Uneasiness flickered in the mate's honest eyes and he nodded and the captain turned away. The mate would worry now, he knew, worry his head off, wondering what the captain had to tell him.. Captain Haskill was a kindly man, but he chuckled softly to himself. Then he looked back at Johnny, standing there, forlorn and woebegone, beside the foremast. Aye, Johnny was one crestfallen and unhappy boy.

"Johnny," the captain said, "don't take it too much to heart—but try harder next time."

Johnny gulped miserably.

SHORTLY after, Captain Haskill heard a diffident knock at his door and looked up to see the mate enter.

"Sit down, Mister," the captain invited, handing the mate a fat cigar.

The blocky mate sat down on the settee, uneasy and restless yet looking conscience-clear.

"What I'm about to tell you, Mister," the captain announced, holding a light to the mate's cigar and then puffing at his own, "is between you and me and the company. This'll be my last trip, Mr. Johnson. I'm retiring."

The captain noted with satisfaction the surprise that showed in the mate's eyes.

"Yes," he mused, "I'm getting old." Then he shook his broad shoulders and stared steadily at the mate. "You've got a master's ticket, Mister."

"Yes, sir," the mate confirmed, pride riding his voice.

"Naturally, I've read it," the captain continued, "up there in the pilothouse. Your ticket's black with pilotage, too. A fine ticket, Mister—and it's time you sailed under it as master."

The mate sort of shrunk into himself, then. "I never could seem to get a break, sir. The port cap'n always maintained I was worth more to the company as a mate, getting crumby ships into shape, sir."

"Well, you're getting a break now, Mister," the captain asserted, decisively. He leaned over and placed his hand on the mate's knee. "I'm recommending you to the port captain to take over the duties of master aboard the *Merrydew* after I leave. I'm senior skipper, and my recommendation will stick."

Captain Haskill was warmed to observe the mate's face flood with happiness, the soon to be realized ambition of his life shining in his eyes.

"All I ask," the captain paused, reflectively, "is that you keep an eye on Johnny Wyn. Help him what you can. That boy comes from my own home town, Mister, and means a lot to me."

The mate leaned forward. "I'd break in the devil himself, sir, to get a chance to go master."

"Good!" The captain's craggy face broke in a smile.

The mate got up, thrust out his calloused paw and the captain took it, cheerfully. "I thank you, sir. I only hope your faith in my ability isn't misplaced."

"I'm sure it isn't, Mister."

The mate left, then, the cigar sticking from his mouth at a proud angle. The captain smiled, placed his hands behind his head and leaned back in his chair. He was pretty sure how the mate felt. He remembered the time he'd been told that he was to be given his first command. Ah! So long ago; yet he recalled the bulldog jowls of old Captain Welch as if it were yesterday. Well, Mr. Johnson would make a good skipper; he was a good man. Yes, that was that. Likely Johnny would never become a sailor, him being a Wyn, but, at least, there'd be peace for the rest of the voyage; for he'd killed the issue between him and the mate.

The days and weeks passed swiftly, now, as the *Merrydew* nosed in and out of Mediterranean ports, many of them war torn and ravaged. Marseille, Genoa, Messina, Salonika, and then out of the Mediterranean and up through the Dardanelles, through the Sea of Marmora to Constantinople and from there through the Bosporous and on into the Black Sea. Constanta and Novorossiisk and Samsun were visited and left behind, after which the *Merrydew* nosed down into the Mediterranean again, stopping off at Beirut, Haifa, and Alexandria and on along the coast of North Africa where she nosed into Sfax, Sousse and Tunis. After that through the Straits of Gibraltar and down to Casablanca, and then away from those sandy shores, homeward bound, the domes and minarets of Casablanca dimming in the distance.

Homeward bound! Sunset cast a roseate glow over the weatherbeaten ship.

Three months had passed and Captain Haskill reluctantly conceded that Johnny Wyn had come no closer to being an asset to the ship. Yet he reserved final judgment, for, from time to time, he caught a tantalizing glimpse of a steel-like quality in Johnny that all those other Wyns had lacked. The captain was puzzled. Could it be that given time—

He sighed. He didn't know. He wasn't sure.

Yet he was certain that, somehow, somewhere, while being molded in life's flaming crucible, Johnny had been given a steel-like tempering. A thing to wonder at; for all of those other Wyns had been molded of wrought iron, nothing more.

So while the captain pondered the ultimate fate of Johnny Wyn the *Merrydew* left Africa far behind her churning screw, and nosed past the Azores with their misty heights and on into northern latitudes where the cold winds blew. Storms tore down out of the Arctic, gutting the sea into rage across half a world. Shipping was mauled the breadth of a thousand miles and all seamen knew sleepless watches.

THE *Merrydew* was sorely tried. Her screw thumped as if the ship were in fright and her aged plates worked and groaned. Aloft, her rigging strummed eerie hymns as it was played on by the drumming pressure of the wind. The decks ran waist deep in brine and the bow pounded deep under mounting seas, and rose, frothing white tons of spittle from her hawse pipes. It was a time when Captain Haskill, hollow eyed and sleepless, kept to the bridge, coffee cup in hand.

Then a black night came and passed and no man slept. Gray dawn crawled slowly out of the east, drooling at sheets of swirling spray carried in the teeth of the wind.

Captain Haskill had his eyes strained on the arcing mast when the foretopmast's starboard shroud let go. He saw the wire break off close to the turnbuckle and lash sideways against the mast. Tense and waiting, he expected the foretopmast to carry away to port, but, by some miracle, it did not. The weak mast held. There it rode, a source of grave danger.

"Mr. Johnson," he said, turning to the haggard mate, "that starboard foretopmast shroud will have to be repaired or a temporary one rigged, somehow. There's the wireless antenna, and SOS calls coming in, and we can't stand a chance of losing it."

The mate's face was very sober. "There's only one way to do a safe job, sir," he muttered, peering through the binoculars, "and that's to bend the broken end of the shroud through the thimble in the turnbuckle, and splice it in. I see it's snapped at the thimble. The parceling and serving around the old splice has kept the whole shroud from unlaying, thank goodness. A new splice will shorten the shroud, of course, but we can unshackle the turnbuckle and reshackle it through one of those short wire eye straps Johnny Wyn made. We'll need to use an extra shackle to shackle the small strap to the eyepad on the foretop."

"You can't get the shroud down to do the

splicing job below, in safety?" asked Captain Haskill, voice husky from weariness.

"No, sir," the mate's voice rang with conviction. "I wouldn't dare send a man to the top of that topmast to unshackle the shroud. The extra weight and increased pressure of the wind might snap the mast, rotten as it is, and carry the man to his death."

"You have a man to do the job?"

"Myself, sir." The mate's face grayed. "It'll be no picnic up there, sir, but the job can be done. The ship's not rolling quite so much now. In fact, the worst of it seems to have passed."

But the mate never reached the top of that mast. As the captain watched him from the bridge, he saw the mate caught by a monstrous sea that crashed across the bulwarks. The mass of brine smashed the mate under one of the winches, where he lay, a gash in his head and one arm turned under him.

Watching their chance, the bosun and an A. B. picked him up and carried him to his cabin. The captain set the mate's broken arm and took six stitches in his forehead.

"There's only one chance left of doing a tight job on that shroud, sir," the mate suggested, speaking slowly and painfully. He looked at the rigger's tools wedged into the shelf beside the bunk. "There's Snafu Johnny, sir!"

Captain Haskill bent over the mate in surprise.

The mate swallowed, anxiety for his ship showing in his eyes. "The boy stuck to it until he learned to splice wire, sir. He's the only man aboard, besides myself, who knows how. As for his being sailor enough to work aloft—well, I dunno, but if you want to try him out, better send a couple of A. B.'s up with him. A splice is the only sure way. Chain nipper and tackle would loosen and slip if used temporarily, and we ain't got a wire clamp on the whole ship. So it'll have to be a splice."

So the captain sent the quartermaster after Johnny Wyn. A few minutes later Johnny eased his long body into the mate's cabin. Captain Haskill noted with satisfaction and a good deal of pride how the voyage had put muscle on Johnny's frame, and instilled a steady purpose that glowed from his eyes.

"Gee, I'm sorry, sir," Johnny swallowed, looking at the mate.

The mate smiled, wryly. Then he told Johnny what was wanted. "We've tried to make a sailor out of you, Johnny, and here's your chance. Think you can handle it?"

Johnny's tanned face glowed. "It's up to me, ain't it, sir?"

The mate chuckled. "Now don't try to hoist the mast out of the deck with a sky hook, Johnny! Take Hanson and Denby aloft with you to give you a hand."

After Johnny had tucked the mate's tools into his belt, he turned to go. Captain Haskill squeezed Johnny's shoulder and went up into the pilothouse. He was both glad and sorry that Johnny Wyn had his chance to show what he could do. If he failed—

The captain shrugged. If he failed on this job, too, he'd have Johnny for company on the way back to Spar Island.

Then he saw Johnny climbing the wet mast. Hanson and Denby followed him, tools and gear dangling from their waists. Johnny reached the foretop and carefully, ever so carefully, pulled himself up over. Then he braced himself somehow, and snatched the broken shroud as it whipped past, an inch from his head.

HANSON and Denby ducked the shroud, made their tools fast to the collar of the jumbo boom, and then they came down that mast, fast. A few seconds later they scrambled in through the lee door of the pilothouse.

"It ain't safe aloft there, Cap'n," Denby asserted, close-set eyes gleaming nastily. "Me'n Hanson come near bein' shook off of that mast, we did."

"That's right," Hanson asseverated vehemently, bull neck thrust out. "Dat mast is swingin' somep'n wicked."

"Wyn's still up there," Captain Haskill reproved.

"Yeah," Denby snarled, wiry body vibrant with truculence. "The kid's green. He ain't got no more sense. He'll be flipped off like a fly, and be just a grease spot on the deck. He's too dumb to know what he's doing."

"You two men better get back aloft and give the kid a hand," Captain Haskill ordered sharply.

"Not me," Denby objected, stubbornly.

"Me neither," growled Hanson.

"It's not impossible up there for experienced seamen," the captain said.

"Well, I ain't goin'," Denby argued.

"Me neither," echoed Hanson.

"What kind of a discharge do you men expect to get at the end of the voyage?" the captain asked. "Most seamen take pride in their seamanship. When I put in my apprenticeship in sail, we worked aloft under far worse conditions than this and no man ever complained."

"You blokes was suckers," Denby retorted. "And me'n Hanson don't give a damn any more about discharges. We're quittin'. The war's over goin' on 'most a year now and the Army can't touch us."

"Yeah," growled Hanson, a leer twisting his heavy features.

Captain Haskill shrugged. "Return to the jobs the mate had you on before Wyn called you."

The two men quickly eased themselves through the door. Captain Haskill stared after them in disgust.

"Nice guys!" Jeems, the long faced quartermaster, snorted, breaking a three months' silence. "I'll help the kid, sir."

Captain Haskill looked out of the spray-lashed port. Perhaps he'd better send the quartermaster aloft to help Johnny. The second mate could come up and take the wheel. No! Johnny appeared to be doing all right, he saw. He'd lashed himself to the topmast with a length of half inch manila, which gleamed a sickly yellow in the greenish light. He'd cut away the broken ends of wire from the thimble on the turnbuckle, had unshackled the turnbuckle, and had bent in the end of the shroud and stopped it off. Now he was splicing the wire, hands deftly working the tucks and rolling them in with the marlingspike.

The powerful glasses brought Johnny's face up almost to the glass of the port. A pang went through Captain Haskill when he saw how strained the boy's face was as he perched away up there on the edge of nothing. A tough job, that, for a green hand and a sixteen year old! The old captain felt guilty as all sin at having let the boy go aloft.

Then, suddenly, a feeling of wonder passed over him. Every movement Johnny made was so deft and sure that the boy was really a joy to watch. All the Wyn clumsiness had vanished. Every inch of Johnny showed the sailor, now, a man born to his job. Captain Haskill blinked and he knew a profound sense of happiness. Glory be! He'd leave a Wyn at sea, after all, to carry on where he left off.

When Johnny was through, the turnbuckle turned tight between shroud and strap and locked with cotter pins and the mast supported safely once more, he gathered his tools and started down. It wasn't until he reached the foot of the mast and stood on the safety of the deck and bent over and retched that Captain Haskill realized what an ordeal the boy had been through.

Shortly after, in the mate's cabin, the captain listened to the mate.

"Yes, I know," grinned the mate, having heard the captain out. "Johnny's been shaping up surprisingly well for two weeks now, but I wanted to be sure before passing the good word along, sir. Next trip I'm starting him off on navigation. Eh, Snafu Johnny?"

"Gee!" Johnny gulped, eyes glowing as he rubbed a spray-wet cheek with his completely healed stub finger.

"Looks like in about three years you'll be needin' a sextant, Johnny," the captain chuckled, winking at the mate. "I'll be glad to pass mine along into good hands."

Johnny was so happy that Captain Haskill bubbled over with happiness, too. This last trip had certainly turned out to be a humdinger.

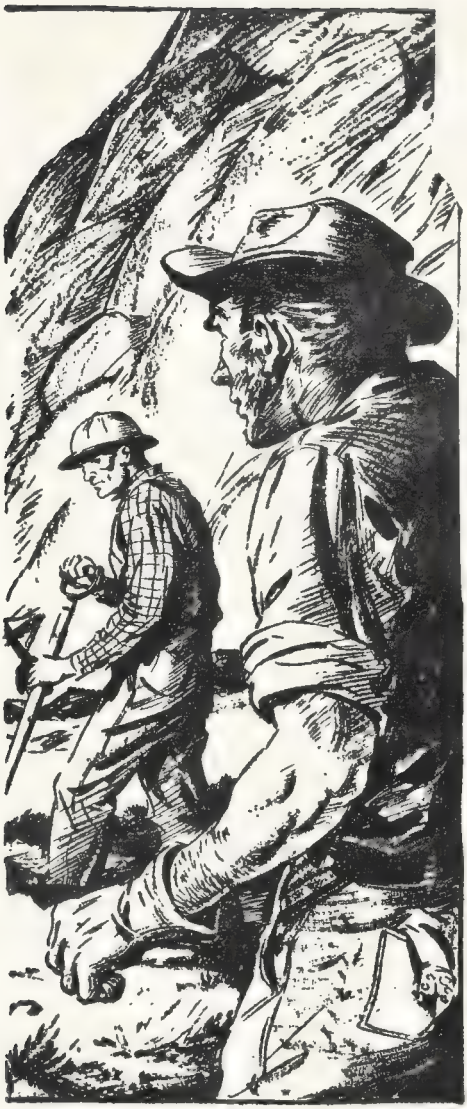
By

CIFF

CHESHIRE

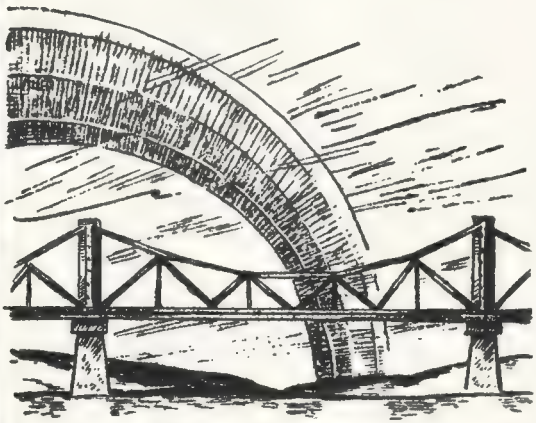
KERMIT did not use the letter. Instead, he rode the bus into Snyderville, then caught a Halvarsen truck out to the bridge job like any toughened construction hand confident of getting on. Only young Kermit Shrock was not seasoned, and he was anything but confident. He had come out of the mist-sprayed coolness of a vegetable stand in a big chain store in the city to plow into the lapping heat waves of this Catjaw high desert country.

The letter was in his scuffed old suitcase, with the new work clothes, his father's gold hunting-case watch, his mother's Bible, and the old snapshot from the days when the family



A right-cross clipped the foreman's jaw, and his knees slacked.

A BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE



ILLUSTRATED BY MONROE EISENBERG

had been together. It was only something that Kermit valued but probably would never do anything with. It was just something to keep.

He had never been east of the Cascades before, and the bare, rugged, burning vastness of the brown land roused a deep disturbance in him. Savants explained that once a more violent Pacific had laid claim to the continent, pulling itself inland as far as the Rockies, only to be defeated by crust spasms and hurled back. Vast inland lakes had been lost from it that, in the young turbulence of the earth, had rolled and scoured here for aeons. Surely its marks remained here and the sense of old and massive conflicts.

A state highway was going across the desert now, but the Hell High Canyon bridge contract was only one of many Halvarsen Construction Company jobs. Kermit had no idea where big Charlie Halvarsen was, at present. Certainly he would have forgotten the letter he wrote, twelve years before, down on the coast. A letter the big, towheaded engineer had addressed to the future; his own, Kermit had come to realize. Halvarsen had caught up with that future. Since then he had become one of the biggest bridge contractors on the west coast. Kermit guessed that the letter might embarrass him now.

Alkali dust boiled up around the flatbed

truck on the battered temporary road to the canyon, and in the hollows between the rearing escarpments of rim rock, that stretched for unending miles, it was unbearably hot and frightening to a valley man. The road climbed gradually onto a plateau that was split deeply by the raging white river. The Halvarsen camp stood on the lip of the river canyon, unsheltered, dusty, slowly burning in the beating sun, graced only by scrub juniper and sage and rabbit brush.

Sweat and dust had muddied Kermit's face by the time the truck clattered into the camp. The driver pointed out a shack that was the site office. "You'll find Vic Loos in there, likely, kid. If he's in a good humor, you'll probably get a job. But you must need one bad to come to this stink-hole."

Kermit thanked the man and went into the office. There was a big room, with a couple of smaller ones opening from it. An office man was footing a stack of time-cards. He looked at Kermit, seeing a big, rawboned youth, and nodded vacantly.

"What's on your mind, kid?"

"Who'd I see about a job?"

The clerk jerked a thumb toward one of the side doors. Kermit went in what must be Vic Loos' office. A man was tilted back in a swivel chair there, paring his fingernails with a jackknife. He was in his mid-thirties, a slat-bodied man with curly brown hair that was short and parted precisely in the middle. His lean face showed the weathering of any construction man, but was petulant. He kept on cutting his nails, seeming unaware that anybody had come in.

THERE was patience and a quiet dignity in young Kermit Shrock, and he continued to stand silently even when he became aware that he was being ignored with a subtle kind of contempt. Yet a prickling sensation had crawled into his temples. Loos finished one hand and went to work on the other. All five fingers, cutting and scraping and cleaning, then he snapped the knife shut.

In the calmest way Kermit said, "If you want to fix your feet while you're at it, mister, I can wait."

Loos shot him a quick, puzzled glance, then dislike began to seep into his eyes. "What do *you* want?"

"A job."

"What kind?"

"Anything."

Loos tapped the edge of the desk with the knife, scowling. "Good, as well as smart, are you? You don't look dry behind the ears."

"I don't mean I can do anything," Kermit said mildly. "I mean I'm willing to. I'd like to get a start in the bridge game."

After a long moment Loos nodded. "All right. Tell Dunkel to fill out the papers."

Kermit went back to the outer office. Murray Dunkel looked at him with hard interest, then got some mimeographed forms out of a desk drawer. Loos came out of his office with his hat on, snapping at Dunkel as he passed, "Send him down to Harry Wister. He wants to build a bridge." He went on out, smiling grimly to himself.

Dunkel slipped a form into a typewriter and looked at Kermit again. The clerk was young, too; in a lean, hard way he was good-looking. Now his lips formed a soundless whistle. "You set him back on his tail, kid."

Kermit grinned. "For a minute I didn't give a hoot if he hired me or not. How come he did?"

"If you'd been sent packing you'd never learn you can't do things like that, kid. But let's fill out this application."

Kermit answered a lot of questions. He was twenty-one, weighed a hundred eighty-three, stood six-one. Dunkel wrote "light" and "fair" in the hair and complexion spaces without asking and put down "blue" for Kermit's gray-green eyes. Kermit divulged that he had completed eight grades of school, had no next of kin, that his main experience had been selling papers, carrying a route, and working in a chain grocery store. There were a lot of other questions, to which he dug up answers. Then he put his name on a line at the bottom.

Dunkel said, "Here's a tip, kid. Some guys've got a foot you got to kiss every day if you don't want it in your pants. Loos is one of 'em. But if you ever say I said that, I'll call you a liar. Me, I just try to get along."

Within a week young Kermit Shrock knew exactly what Dunkel had meant, and why he had been hired instead of sent packing for giving the job engineer the lip. It was a tough camp, shot through with political influence. Vic Loos had a hand-picked cadre cut to his own egotistical pattern. The rest of the outfit truckled, or suffered the consequences.

The canyon that the bridge was spanning was over three hundred feet deep and much less than that across, two rises of basalt rock that, at the top, burned through the soles of a man's shoes. A cantilever bridge was going in, with massive, arched concrete-and-steel footings to be bonded to either wall. The bases had been hewn out and forms were being built. A concrete mixing plant was being constructed. The camp side of the big cut was littered with lumber, sand and gravel, sacked cement and equipment. The camp shacks sat unprotected, slowly browning in the eternal sun. A huge gantry stood on the lip, and a suspension walk had been built across the canyon. Jackhammers and air compressors chattered and panted through the long days.

When he first looked down at the river so far below, a tight sickness had filled Kermit's stomach. There were cables and ropes everywhere, and scores of men worked up and down the faces of the cliffs around the footings. As a common laborer, Kermit found that he was assignable anywhere the extra help was needed. Harry Wister, the job foreman, proved to be a big, burly man who fawned on Vic Loos and, as compensation, rode roughshod over the crew. The first morning Wister divined that young Kermit was afraid of the big gut, and the game was on. He was totally inexperienced and so was wide open for abuse. They gave him the most dangerous chores on the project, time after time, working on the high cat-walks, swinging in bosun's seats, retrieving tools and materials from high, rocky eminences, toting dynamite for the powder man.

At first Kermit thought it was a matter of getting used to it, but he couldn't. He never dared look down, when he worked around the forms, and his nights were filled with sweating, terrifying dreams. He realized that he was being given more dangerous work than would be his normal run of luck. They wanted him to quit, to show yellow and pull out. Yet Kermit carried out every task they assigned him with a patience and dignity that was maddening to his taunters. He saw Vic Loos' enmity deepening.

At the end of the first week, Kermit knew that he was close to finished. The heat remained, constant and torturous, and his suffering was only a little abated after someone troubled to tell him to take the salt tablets kept by all the water coolers. The temper that had prompted him to speak up to Vic Loos that first day crowded close to the surface. Loos would never give up until he had broken the boy's spirit. Kermit knew it and despaired. He fought down his terror of the canyon and he carried out their risky chores. He came to the end of his rope.

He would have nailed Vic Loos and given him what he had coming had he not dreamed one night of big Charlie Halvarsen. The dream remained vivid when he wakened and lay spent and miserable in the dawn. His mind went back then to the cool bay and the huge bridge the W.P.A. was building across it.

KERMIT SHROCK had been living with his widowed mother then, on the little coast ranch that was mostly salal and salmonberry. They had kept a few cows, and every evening the nine-year-old Kermit had gone to the town to deliver milk. He never failed to pause on his way home to admire the new bridge, the pure strength and beauty of it as it looped across the wide mud flats.

Charlie Halvarsen had been a minor engineer on that project. He had once headed his own company, but the depression had wiped it out, and he had been forced to go to work for somebody else. Kermit had not realized that anybody had noticed his own rapt interest in the bridge until one evening when Halvarsen stopped beside him.

"What do you think of it, son?"

Kermit had been unable to express himself for a thoughtful moment. "There's nothing purtier," he had breathed, at last. "Nothing *could* be any purtier."

Often, after that, he would see Halvarsen, and they would talk for a while. The engineer had explained a lot of the technical details. A that time Kermit had not guessed the deep discouragement that was in the man. They were good friends by the time the bay bridge was finished, and the last time they met Halvarsen had given Kermit the letter. Though he had read it a thousand times since, the photographic impression of that first reading, as he sat beside the road on his way home, would have lasted for Kermit's lifetime.

The unsealed envelope had been addressed simply to a Halvarsen Construction Company of the future, and the letter was very brief:

This is to recommend Kermit Shrock for employment as a bridgeman. A man needs no better qualification than his belief that a bridge is a 'purty thing.'

It had taken Kermit a long while to understand that his boyish enthusiasm had fueled lagging fires within the big man. That Charlie Halvarsen must have learned to see bridges again as the boy had seen the bay bridge. So Halvarsen had got on his feet again. Now he was known everywhere.

Even so, Kermit did not take the letter out of his suitcase when he rose to dress that morning. He had never had the chance to study to become the big engineer he had hoped to be. His mother had married again and his step-father had moved them to the city. He had not cared for his step-son, and finally had deserted them both. The burden had become Kermit's until finally his mother had died from overwork and discouragement. Even then, it had been several months before Kermit realized he was free and decided to go to work for Charlie Halvarsen's company, on his own and not daring to use the letter.

As he tramped out to the job in the morning's rising heat, Kermit knew that he had to stick. Even this bridge, in what all the men called a hell-hole, would be a beauty when it was built. He was having a part in it, and this was something that Vic Loos and all his toadies could not touch. So Kermit once more dared the scaffolding in the canyon.

Kermit gained a friend, shortly after that. Murray Dunkel, the office man, had been

sharing a two-by-four shack with an engineering aide Loos fired for insubordination. Dunkel had been good friends with the man, and the incident seemed to put a bit of starch in his spine. He invited Kermit to move in. Kermit accepted, and he quickly grew to like the clerk. Dunkel was cynical and frankly self-seeking, but somewhere in him was a sense of sympathy. Dunkel heard things in the office, and Kermit finally learned exactly what he was up against.

"Loos hates you worse than the day you made him feel foolish," Dunkel told him. "He expected to have you scared out long before this. If you're smart, you'll clear out, fella. But I know you won't. You're a funny kid."

"I want to work for this outfit. I'll get over being scared, and then it won't matter."

"Boy, you'll never get anywhere till you play ball with the powers that be. You'll never get a promotion. You'll never get anything. Loos has got this outfit in the palm of his hand. He can even fix it so you can't go to work for another unit."

"What's Charlie Halvarsen thinking about? He's not that kind of man!"

Dunkel grinned. "Maybe not. I've only seen him a time or two. But he's got too much on his mind to know what's going on everywhere. That's why the little big-shots can get away with murder. Tell you something that's got Loos nervous, though. Halvarsen expects to be up here next month."

Kermit's last irresolution vanished. He wanted to see big Charlie again, though he knew the contractor would neither recognize nor recall him. He wore out the weeks, but he did not grow less frightened of the canyon. Vic Loos did not hate him less.

Then Loos decided to wind up the business summarily. At his vantage point in the office, Murray Dunkel began to perceive and report the plot.

"A man like that not only hates the man he can't break. He gets scared of him. The boys in camp here're afraid to get friendly with you, but they know what's going on. If Loos don't break you, he'll know he's slipping. Two things have always happened before. Either they knuckle down or they spout off and get fired. A man or two's tried to whip Loos, but he won't corner. So he can't figure it out. You just take it, when everybody knows you're scared to death of the gut."

"I'll whip him before I'm done with it."

"He don't mean to give you the chance. I heard him and Harry Wister talking about you. He wants to get rid of you before Charlie Halvarsen comes up. He's afraid you're one man with the guts to spout off about things."

"Think he'll just fire me?" Kermit asked. He was proud that he hadn't scared out.

"They don't dare, now. They've got to make you quit or frame cause, so anything you say'll sound like spite. Just watch it, kid. Loos got a letter from Halvarsen. He'll be up here about Monday."

SATURDAY arrived with nothing new being introduced into the now familiar pattern. They finished the lower forms on Friday, and pouring was to start on the bases the following Monday. Kermit was helping to clean up the litter left by the carpenters, and in mid-morning Harry Wister beckoned to him. Kermit followed the foreman to the lip.

Wister pointed down into the gut to where the white waters of the river boiled eternally. "Look, kid, it's low water. We want to get a stage gauge painted on that bluff down there, big enough to read from the top. All it takes is a big white line on the rock every foot for about ten feet. Get a bucket of paint and a brush and something to use for a straight-edge. Pete'll let you down with the gantry."

Kermit stared at him, the old sickness souring his tight stomach. He did not know whether the work was really necessary or not. But he could tell from the wicked gleam in Wister's eye that the foreman expected him to beg off. Kermit looked down once more along the three hundred feet of bulging cliff, and could not help swallowing. But he forced himself to say, "O.K.," and move off toward the supply room.

As long as he had been on the job, nobody had ever descended the canyon in this wise, and for an instant before he slid into the bosun's chair on the line swinging from the gantry crane, Kermit almost rebelled. But scores of eyes were watching him now, some in sympathy, others in amusement. They had seen things of this nature so many times before.

Then a man growled, "What do we care what the river stage is? It'd take another Noah's flood to reach the top!"

Wister turned on him savagely. "Since when did you start questioning what we do around here?"

Kermit was in the seat, a gallon of white paint, a brush, and a short length of one-by-four hanging from it. The gantryman lifted him and swung him over the lip. It took every ounce of Kermit's strength to keep from shutting his eyes until he was out of sight. Then they glued tight, his sweating hands clamped to the rope sling fastened to the singing cable, and all his fear of his weeks here was less than now.

He knew that he was dropping far faster than was safe. Once he brushed the rock, and after that he kept his eyes open, watching the bulges below him, missing them by a hair's breadth, swinging himself into the clear with his feet. It grew shadowy as he dropped into

the earth. Then the growling, white-frothed river seemed to leap at him.

Kermit knew he was going to hit the water. Instead of halting him twenty feet above, finishing the descent in delicate drops, the flagman only dipped his flag for slow. Kermit hit the boiling water and went under, and but for the safety belt he would have been washed from the seat. He clawed to the surface, the line slack around him, then it tightened with unnecessary roughness, swinging him out of the water and letting him arc wildly from one cliff to the other.

Rage forced the last bit of fear from him. It was coldly, cruelly deliberate. They expected him to be in such a state of nerves when he reached the top again that he would like nothing better than his time. He got the swinging stopped. He knew that they had never expected him to last this far. He was certain now that there was no real need for gauge marks on the cliff. But they would get them!

His equipment had survived the submersion, and Kermit pried the lid off the paint bucket. In water to his waist, he measured the first twelve inches, steadied the board he had brought for a straight-edge, and painted a line. Then he measured the next and painted it, and signaled the rim for a slight lift. One by one he painted the ten lines, with the gantryman occasionally giving him a jerk that sent him swinging crazily, certain he was going to have his brains dashed out against the rocks.

Yet the arresting fear of weeks did not return to him. A fierce determination came to him with the knowledge that he had taken their worst, unless they actually were prepared to murder him. He wasn't even afraid of that, in his deep anger. He finished his lines, threw away the straight-edge, and signaled to be brought up.

The gantryman put everything he had into that rise. At times Kermit was certain he would be flung from the swinging seat, belt or no, and again a bulge above him seemed certain to crush his skull like an egg-shell. Yet his eyes were open when he came up over the lip and the crane operator swung him in and dropped him roughly to the ground. They had licked the fear they themselves had fostered. He could be a bridgeman.

KERMIT'S knees were weak as he staggered to his feet and unfastened the safety belt. Most of the crew had gathered here by now, and there was a new look on their faces. Kermit did not take time to interpret it. He plunged straight for Harry Wister.

The big foreman was prepared for it. He bent as Kermit charged, and he got in the first swing, a clipping punch that made a ringing sound in Kermit's ears. Wister grinned, sure of himself suddenly as Kermit staggered.

Kermit shook his head. His first surge of rage quieted, and the coldness of pond ice was in his eyes. He moved in, lightly, deliberately. A smoking left fist sank into Wister's belly, bringing a grunt. A right-cross clipped his jaw. The foreman's eyes glazed, his knees slacked. He fell like a sack of cement.

A man said softly. "That does me more good than a month in town!"

Kermit headed for the office, which was out of sight of the lip. He did not notice a strange, dusty coupe parked in front. He plowed through the door and ignored the alarmed, wild shakes of Murray Dunkel's head. He surged into Vic Loos' private office.

Loos had been talking to somebody, but he looked up and his eyes went wild. He clawed up out of his chair, backing. There was clearly no fight in him. Kermit seized him by the shirt front and began slapping the man. He slapped him until the man fell face down on the floor and refused to rise. A deep voice said, "That's enough, pup," and Kermit looked around.

"Charlie Halvarsen!" he gasped.

Vic Loos struggled to his feet. He looked wildly at the big contractor. "The man's been a trouble-maker from the start! You're fired, Shrock! Get out!"

"Just a minute, young man." Charlie Halvarsen's booming voice sounded exactly as it had twelve years before. "I'd like to know why you did it, before you go."

"I did it, and I got my money's worth. I'm ready to quit." Kermit had no charges to make. He knew they had never expected him to last long enough to paint those unnecessary markers at the bottom of the cliff. Now let them try to erase them!

Halvarsen looked at Loos. "I've been learning a lot of things by showing up on a job a day or two ahead of schedule. This kid isn't a trouble-maker. No man who thinks a bridge is the 'purtiest thing on earth' would try to gum up the works."

Kermit stared. "You remember!"

"I sure do, but I didn't place you till he said your name. Why didn't you ever use that letter, boy? I went down to the coast once to look you up, but you were gone."

"Yeah, we moved away."

Halvarsen grinned at Loos, who was shifting position uneasily. "It's something you wouldn't understand, fellow. I was ready to get out of the game once, until a young shaver reminded me that a bridge is a thing of beauty. I think you might as well start packing, Loos, and take your sidekicks with you. I'm only sorry he isn't ready to take your job. But maybe he will be, before long. He meets the basic requirement—give me a man who loves a bridge, and it's easy to build the engineer."

ILLUSTRATED BY NICK EGGENHOFER

ONE MORE RIVER

By GEORGE C. APPELL

IT WAS dark when they reached the river, and Mackenzie felt proud of his timing. His orders were being carried out; there was no sound save the soft chopping of hooves, occasional whimpers of wet leather and, down the moonlit slope, the rushing chuckle of the river.

By hand signal they formed from fours into twos and prepared to cross the ford. They sat a-saddle waiting, tired silent men whose hunger had been aggravated by one biscuit apiece that day, and whose thirst was the harsh thirst of men who had ridden since dawn under the fierce Arizona sun.

Then they were in the village, plunging through torn lodges, firing blindly.

Major Brace reined up beside Mackenzie and asked for permission to cross.

"Not yet, Brace." He knew that by now every man must know where they were and where they were going. "Brace, there'll be no talking on the other side. Absolutely none. They know the penalty."

"Yes, sir." Brace paused. "I'll pass the word again, Colonel."

The musk of damp hides filled the darkness, along with the rancidness of man-sweat and the cloying stench of grimy clothing drying in the night coolness. Mackenzie sniffed. He wriggled his nostrils and was satisfied. He believed that men approaching combat should be warmed up and not dry; be believed that horses about to ride hard should be dry inside and wet to the hocks on the hide.

That way, they wouldn't suck wind or pull a cramp.

Mackenzie sniffed again, as if gauging the weight of the odors. He saw Brace coming back, and raised a white-gloved hand.

Turning his horse toward the river, he dropped his arm forward and splashed in. It was all gravel for a few yards, then he felt the animal fight sand. He hoped the maps had been right and that this was a safe ford. Water lashed at his boots and seeped in; he tugged the new Sharps rifle from its boot and gripped harder with his knees as the saddle swayed.

Midstream, on a soggy sandspit, he reined in and looked behind him. The column, led by Brace, was filtering down the slope, picking its way into the river.

MACKENZIE felt a tug of exasperation at his own necessary orders. He wanted to stand in his stirrups and bellow at them to hurry. But you don't disobey orders, not even your own. Orders, by Mackenzie's creed, were inviolable tenets and by them you lived; proper living was disciplined living, and that began with yourself.

He wheeled his horse and spurred toward the opposite bank, clear now under a star-smeared sky. Jimmie Deer, the Kickapoo scout, sat a long-shanked mule on the bank's gray summit.

"Ho."

Mackenzie reached the bank and halted his quivering horse, stroking its neck, rubbing wide, slippery shoulders.

"All clear?"

"Clear."

Mackenzie dropped the Sharps rifle back in its boot and turned again to watch the column. Brace was coming up the bank, struggling with his bay; B Troop's guidon flapped limply, uncased for trouble. Most of the regiment was still on the other side, and Mackenzie noted, gratefully, that it was not bunching up. He'd handed a captain the benzine board a month before for allowing his troop to bunch up when the Comanches jumped Rock Creek Station. Satando had brought up a captured cohorn mortar and blown them into hot meat.

He'd hand out another board if he had to, by God.

"Major Brace." The major turned aside to let B Troop pass at a walk. "Take the regiment one thousand yards in. There's a small arroyo there. Make camp. Four hours' sleep, no more."

Jimmie Deer sat his mule in silence as the troopers jounced past in twos. When the quartermaster detail and the mule-drawn ambulance came up dripping, Jimmie spread his hands.

"All in now, all in."

Mackenzie nodded.

His regiment, one of the two which campaigned with all its component parts, was now in Mexico. He beckoned to Jimmie, and side by side they followed the bouncing ambulance toward the arroyo.

The brightening moon lay blue on dusty uniforms; horses, dim in the shadows, wheezed at picket lines. Mackenzie thought they all looked like ghosts.

He decided not to sleep. "Jimmie."

"Yah, Colonel?"

"Make a circle scout." He whirled a finger in the air. "Let the outposts know you're out, and when you'll be back."

"Yah, Colonel."

Jimmie rode away at a trot, feet swinging, elbows flopping. Mackenzie found his way to the head of the arroyo and slid wearily from the saddle. Until dawn, at least, they'd be safe from Indian attack, so fearful is the Indian of dying at night. But long before dawn they'd be on their way, invaders of a foreign country which might with good reason send its cavalry against them.

Mackenzie sat cross-legged in the moon shadow, his shoulders finding a comfortable place against a hard boulder. He pulled off his wide-brimmed hat and reviewed again the verbal orders Cump Sherman had given him, the only orders he had. It was a delicate chance to take, this business, but it had to be done. Back east, they were yelling for the Army's scalp when the Army was losing enough of its own; at times it seemed that only United States Grant and Thomas Nast understood what was happening out west.

THAT'S why Grant had sent Cump Sherman out to size up the situation and decide what to do. So Cump had strode into the Fourth's headquarters one day, dressed in civilian clothes for security reasons, and told Mackenzie to mount up and ride. "But you don't have to do it, in your position," he added.

This would be Mackenzie's last campaign.

He was retiring in a month, and if he failed now it would be a messy finish to the hard career he'd chosen, the career he'd followed so brilliantly.

"I'll take it, General."

"I can give it to Sturgis. He can be here in a week."

"It can't wait a week."

Nor could it. Satando was in Mexico, and Mexico was big. Satando wouldn't hole up and wait to be captured; he'd move, scamper—like a tarantula.

Cump's slumbrous eyes shot wide. "It'll have to be quick! Two days—no more than two days. In fast, snatch the snake if you can, and out again."

Mackenzie said quietly, "Forget Sturgis. I'll do this."

"Can't write orders for you!" Cump was showing him the worst of it. "No authority for this, none whatsoever."

"Damn the authority." With Mackenzie, this was personal. Satando was a living embarrassment to him who refused to be embarrassed. He was, in Mackenzie's opinion, a renegade axeman with a fast horse and many friends. To bring him back on a rope—that, now, would be the way to leave the service. Honorably, of course, and with Satando in his saddle bags. Crook had chased him for three years and never got within a mile; Miles had tried all one winter.

Cump said, "All right, you get him."

Maybe, thought Mackenzie, I can really bring him back. He glanced down at Cump, sitting in the shade of headquarters verandah, and slowly rubbed the arrow wound in his right thigh. That was Satando's arrow that had plunged through his leg and pinned him to the saddle.

"I'll get him."

Cump scratched his sandy beard. "I know your feud, but there are other things to do down there. Burn all the Kickapoo villages, and the Lipan villages, and whatever Apaches you find. But bring back Satando."

"I will."

"Gently, of course."

Mackenzie almost smiled. "Of course."

Cump cleared his throat. "There's only one thing—you're limited for space."

"How?"

"Don't go south of the Rio Piedras."

Mackenzie pursed his lips. The Rio Piedras was less than a day's march in. "Suppose he crosses it?"

"Those are your orders, Colonel."

Mackenzie knew what he meant; there would be Mexican cavalry beyond that point. Not that he feared Mexican cavalry. The Fourth could lick anything, because he'd made it that way. But the political complications might embarrass Grant.

MACKENZIE moved his shoulders against the boulder to relieve their aching. He sniffed, then stood up. The men were drying out.

He stamped down the picket line, feeling hides and rubbing haunches and hocks. He paused at A Troop's guidon and listened to the ruffling snores and vague mouth noises of exhausted men lost in sleep. He wondered where Jimmie Deer was and when he'd come back. Jimmie Deer was like an outstretched hand in a dark room; without his report, it would be difficult to plan the next march.

Mackenzie sat down by the boulder again and rubbed his right thigh where it ached from the long ride. Whatever Jimmie Deer told him, he would not act impetuously. Impetuosity upset self-discipline; without that, you could not impose discipline. Impetuosity, in Mackenzie's mind, was for stock brokers and damned fools. He'd seen its result that time at Rock Creek Station: a smoldering compound filled with heat-bloated bodies, flies already collecting on gleaming scalps.

He thought of Sturgis up north with the Seventh, and of his fumbling, over-careful ways. They said Sturgis spent most of his time on leave, and that young Custer had the regiment these days. Custer was impetuous, but he wasn't a damned fool. Perhaps, thought Mackenzie, there was a middle ground which excluded both fumblers and fools, a ground where judgment and discipline hung neatly balanced, each nurturing the other. Perhaps.

He kneaded his thigh again and thought of Satando. He thought of a tarantula. He smiled tightly.

Jimmie Deer came out of the moon shadows and squatted. He stabbed a finger into the southeast. "Kickapoo village."

"Where?"

"Twel' mile. Big lodges. All asleep."

"New village?" He was thinking of his tarantula.

"Old. Six mont'." Jimmie grinned. "I don' think Satando."

Mackenzie stood up. "You mount, lead me there." He found Brace and shook him awake. "Alert the regiment. Column of platoons."

They rode at a slow trot, Mackenzie alone behind the advance guard. Left behind, for fear of noise, were the quartermaster wagons and ambulance, with orders to follow in two hours. One platoon from B Troop was with them, but the loss of one platoon wouldn't make much difference—not unless they met Satando and Mex cavalry together.

Mackenzie was afraid; it tightened every muscle in his body and tingled at the base of his spine. It dried out his mouth and gripped at his guts, and he valued the feeling. Fear and cowardice were two separate things in his

mind. Fear was a warning instinct, invaluable in the field; cowardice was the dissolution of all instinct. So he rode with his fear, tense and alert. But not impetuous.

He could barely see Jimmie Deer trotting ahead of the point, his canvas suit and gray mule blending into the gloom of the desert. Jimmie was a good hand to have in front, a brake to illogical action.

An hour past midnight, Jimmie pulled down his mule and lifted an arm. Mackenzie cantered past the point. "This it?"

Jimmie pointed. In a shallow bowl of terrain, half a mile ahead, huddled the lodges. A spark of light, a dying fire, pricked the night and burned out. "All asleep," Jimmie whispered.

The ethics of the thing didn't bother Mackenzie. These were Kickapoos who had plundered Arizona and Texas for twelve years. And besides, he had his orders. "Wipe 'em out," Cump had said. "Burn 'em all." In this service, you stuck to your orders; personal emotion had no place.

Mackenzie waved the column forward and closed up on the point. The noise of hoofbeats, the rising bump and jangle of equipment, sounded to his ears like a circus parade. He straightened in his stirrups and turned: "Right front into line!" His voice cracked the night like a whip.

Even if the village awoke now, it would be too late. The long, uneven line of troops flowed over the rim of the bowl and rolled down on the lodges like dark surf.

"Gallop!"

A dog skittered from one of the lodges and raised his bark to the sky. A figure appeared in the flap and a light showed. Then others came running and Mackenzie heard voices piping over the thunder of the charge.

THE fear was gone now and he felt exhilaration rise through him like wine. He lay low on the pommel, reins taut along his horse's straining neck. He heard carbines spatter from the line behind him and a kneeling figure with arm drawn back sank forward. Another stumbled against the whiteness of a lodge, clutching drunkenly.

Then they were in the village, plunging through torn lodges, firing blindly, riding across figures on the ground, stabbing whatever they could reach. A flare of light rose suddenly as a lodge caught fire, then the whole village seemed to be in flame.

Mackenzie, reins held short, yanked his Sharps rifle loose and slammed two shots into a woman who staggered into the light, her hair smoking and little rings of flame curling her flesh. A tall brave drew back a spear, teeth flashing horribly, and Mackenzie shot him through the chest.

He heard himself ask Jimmie Deer, "Your people?"

"Mine go north."

It made Mackenzie feel better, somehow. He spurred onto the dancing ground and watched the last of the lodges fold in flames as charred wood embers and scraps of hide scattered upward in the glow. There had been no rifle fire from the village; they'd had only bows and spears. Satando's people would have had rifles.

Mackenzie signaled a bugler. "Recall." He wheeled his horse and saw Brace firing his service Colt into a heap of coals. "Major Brace! Have Mr. Styers remain to clean up on foot. The rest will reorganize on the far slope."

They rode away from the flames less than twenty minutes after the attack; Brace reported no casualties, and Mackenzie regarded that as a good omen. "Next village, Jimmie, we'll find him."

"Tha' Satando?" Jimmie shook his head. "I don' think so. He too fast." Jimmie pointed to the burning lodges. "Signal."

Mackenzie winced. The sky-glow would warn Satando more surely than the whispering wires of the white man.

"Then we'll ride all night, by God."

They rode south at a walk, smudged, gray men under a gray, murky sky. Sweating, once more, and too tired to talk, they gave loose rein and were grateful for the strength to balance in the saddle.

Dawn was nudging night aside when they came to a break of ground overlooking the Rio Huarache, and Mackenzie ordered a halt. "No fires."

When Jimmie Deer had chewed his dried beef and biscuit, Mackenzie sent him forward across the Huarache to a Mexican village on the plain. "Tell 'em the whole damned United States Army is here. Tell 'em we have claws instead of spurs, and that we want Satando. We'll follow you up."

This was the last day. Tonight, according to Cump's orders, they'd return; so today would have to be well-spent. Mackenzie thought again of his tarantula, and spat sharply through the fork of a cactus.

Mr. Styers led his cleanup troop in after sunrise and reported everything finished. "They had some fine-looking scalp poles, Colonel." He coughed in his palm. "From Rock Creek, some of 'em." Mr. Styers had a girl back in Baltimore and he had debated, for awhile, upon the advisability of sending her a hairy memento. He had decided not to.

"Get your men fed, Mr. Styers. We're moving shortly."

Mackenzie ordered Stables and warned his troop commanders about the pleasures of being left alone on foot in the desert after a horse has gone lame or, less likely, dropped dead.

The ambulance and quartermaster wagons appeared at mid-morning with their escort from B Troop, and Mackenzie allowed them one hour to prepare for the next march.

He wondered what luck Jimmie Deer was having.

At the shallow Huarache, Mackenzie ordered all troops to dismount in crossing and put soaked neckerchiefs in hat crowns. He calculated that the coolness would last for half an hour, and the psychology for three.

At the village, they found Jimmie Deer still talking to a circle of silent listeners whose musty, worn serapes were thrown carelessly over thin shoulders. The villagers eyed the troopers furtively.

"Well, Jimmie?"

Jimmie winked. "They think we kill 'em, they don' find Satando."

"Do they know where he is?"

"They say no, they don' know. They scared."

Mackenzie glared evilly at them. "Tell 'em we'll give 'em something to get scared about, if they don't give us a lead."

Jimmie translated quickly. But the Mexicans shook their heads. "They won't tell, Colonel."

Mackenzie sized them up. It was their country, of course. But he had his orders, and precious little time to carry them out. He drew his Sharps rifle and fired a shot into the ground. The Mexicans watched the dust fade away, fascinated.

"Tell 'em that's what they'll all get if we don't have Satando by tonight. Tell 'em we'll tie their bodies to a wheel and roll it back to Washington City."

He glanced at the tired, waiting troopers. "For'ard—trot!"

They left the village behind in their dust.

MACKENZIE was beginning to realize how tired he really was; the sick, flat taste of exhaustion had settled in his mouth and his thigh throbbed painfully.

He tried to remember when it was that he had last slept. Back at the post a day, two days ago. A day and a half and two nights ago, he had slept, but it all seemed indistinct now. A squirt of pain shot up his leg and he remembered the jouncing shock of shrapnel at Shiloh, so long ago. He felt as if he was slowly disintegrating in the saddle.

He decided, grimly, that that was a good way for a cavalryman to disintegrate.

At noon, he called a water halt and walked back to the ambulance. The surgeon, a limp-faced youngster with a hat that was too big, scrambled down and clumsily presented himself.

"At ease, Doctor, at ease." Mackenzie hitched up his belt. "What have you got to keep these men awake?"

"Awake, sir?" The surgeon spoke the word querulously.

"Yes, dammit—awake!"

The surgeon jumped. "N-nothing, sir, that I know of."

Mackenzie strode on to the quartermaster detail, glad to stretch his legs. The exercise helped keep him awake. "Sergeant Swagerty—make coffee under the hood. Pass it out at the next halt."

Mounted again, he watched the troopers swing awkwardly to saddles, stiff, weary men who acted like figures in a slow dream. The regiment moved on into Mexico.

Jimmie Deer came jouncing back at a quick trot and reported two Apache villages ahead. He was excited and switched from English to Kickapoo to Spanish until Mackenzie barked him quiet.

"Speak sense, man! How far up are they?"

"Two mile, three mile." Jimmie clenched his fists. "I think this time—Satando!"

Mackenzie stiffened. "How many lodges?" His brain was wide awake, spinning evenly.

"One village, twelve lodges. One village, fifteen lodges. Half mile apart."

Mackenzie waved Major Brace forward. "We'll attack in column of platoons, Brace. Major Corliss' squadron will take the left village, and Major McManus' the right." He remembered the burning woman he'd had to shoot the night before. "Any woman or children will be spared unless they're badly wounded, which can't be helped, at times. And Brace," he added, his tired voice crackling like the slow breaking of a stick, "if any man is killed, I'll make him a corporal."

The fear was on him again, seizing his muscles and filling his lungs so that he had to breathe in quick gasps to get rid of the air, like a child puffing on a candle. He turned away from the lead troop and spurred forward, one hard hand already resting on the stock of the Sharps rifle. His horse was pulling heavy hooves off the ground and the neck and flanks were shimmering in sweat. Mackenzie reined in slightly and tried to control his breathing.

Jimmie Deer pulled up beside him, elbows rising and falling like wings. "I think this time, Colonel!"

A cluster of lodges came into view at the toe of a low slope; beyond them was another group, more scattered. Between them, figures were bent in a ragged field, hoeing.

Mackenzie pulled out the Sharps and cocked it. He eased on the reins and felt his horse pick up the pace. There was no sense, now, in issuing orders. The regiment's heavy gallop was the best it could do; the squadrons knew their objectives, and Mackenzie's role was personal.

He thought of his tarantula.

THE figures in the field raced for the nearest lodges and swart, stocky warriors popped into the sun and stared. These would have rifles, these would have arms taken from Rock Creek and the Staked Plains trading posts and a score of settlements near the border. Mackenzie tried to wet dried lips. He leaned forward and brought the Sharps up to his chin.

Behind him, Corliss' squadron was veering away toward the village at the end of the slope; in a moment McManus would turn, and the headquarters group would be hung between two skirmishes.

Mackenzie fired at a crouching form and missed. The form leaped to life and Mackenzie fired again and the life was snuffed into stillness. He reined in, between the villages, and watched McManus do his work. Smoke rolled upward in the hazy afternoon air, and somewhere people were shrieking. The only other sound was the steady, persistent cracking of carbines. One Apache, bow-legged and short, ran for the slope with a rifle in his hands; a trooper leaned dangerously to sight and fire and the short runner fell, skidded and lay still. Mackenzie thought of their horses; Apaches cannot live without horses. They'd be concealed beyond the slope. Now three braves were racing for it, two with rifles.

A yelling handful of riders from F Troop pounded across the corner of the cornfield and bore down on the runners. One turned, kneeled and raised his rifle. Then he jerked straight, the rifle slipped from his fingers and he rolled across it. The troopers hacked at him with sabers and surrounded the others.

Mackenzie called to Jimmie Deer. "Tell Major Corliss to cut out the good head from their corral. It must be beyond the slope."

Both villages were lost in smoke and dull flame that seemed to hold less heat than the day. Mackenzie watched one more attempt to reach the corral before he trotted down to McManus' position. "Did you find the horses?"

"Yes, sir. About sixty head, all good."

"We can use 'em for remounts if we have to." He glanced at McManus' dusty, damp beard and heaving chest. "See anything of—"

But McManus shook his head. "Not a sign, sir."

Mr. Styers came over and wanted to know what to do with twenty-eight head of women and children.

"Leave 'em here. They can bury the dead," Mackenzie told him.

He rode slowly toward the corral, his eyes sliding from singed corpses to bullet-ripped corpses to corpses that lay twisted and stiff in the embers. The smell was almost welcome, after two days of man and horse hide.

Their luck was holding; there were no casualties other than Corporal Concannon, who had torn a leg on some cactus.

"We caught 'em in bed, all right," Major Corliss observed. "One man was drunk and asleep when we fired his lodge."

"Did you drag him out?"

"No, sir—shot him while he was happy."

Mackenzie rode around the corral inspecting stock. Some of it was branded but most were Indian ponies, pintos that looked scrawny and lean. He ordered Corliss to select twenty and send them back to the quartermaster detail. "And tell Swagerty to set out that coffee. Pass the word."

"What about the weapons, Colonel?" McManus asked.

"Their weapons? Major Brace—collect 'em and have 'em all burned while the lodges are hot. And Brace, Stables now and coffee later. Then we push on."

IT WAS half-past two by Mackenzie's heavy gold stem-winder when Jimmie Deer cut Satando's trail. He was waiting for the column and he didn't say anything. He just pointed. Mackenzie dismounted and bent down. He straightened and looked judgingly at Jimmie Deer. "What do you think?"

"Twen'y-thirty, go east."

"Today, too."

"Today, yes. Travois."

Mackenzie looked at the travois trails. That meant that Satando was moving a village, which meant that he wouldn't make a stand unless he had to. Mackenzie eyed the sun; the heavy stem-winder ticked urgently in his pocket. The Rio Piedras was just ahead, but Satando had turned away from it, had turned east.

Mackenzie had planned to countermarch at five o'clock and be north of the Rio Grande by sunup the next day. But this was too tempting. He tried to think of a ford Satando might be heading for; the Piedras was deep and strong, in this section, and Satando would need a ford.

"Where can he cross, Jimmie?"

"I don' know that Piedras, Colonel." Jimmie's voice was wavering and hoarse and Mackenzie suddenly realized that Jimmie, too, was a human being and subject to exhaustion.

He sucked in his breath and mounted. "Major Brace."

Brace walked his horse forward, a haggard, dust-caked figure who looked to Mackenzie like something from the grave.

"Major Brace, remount one man from each troop for a reconnaissance force. Use those Indian ponies. Then they can go out with Jimmie Deer ahead of the regiment." Mackenzie drew himself straight and snorted. "Move, man!"

On the march again, screened by the remounts, the regiment seemed to sag in its saddles and lose all interest in the past or the future. Only the present counted, and in the present you could relax and let your shoulders drop and your chin could hang on your chest. There was nothing but the heat and the choking dust and, from heels to head, the springing pains of a two-day ride. The future was a blank; the past was forgotten.

Mackenzie let his brain lie still, and from the tired well of it came little disturbing thoughts, like bubbles rising from quiet water. He thought, now, that catching Satando was no more possible than roping a shadow; Satando's horses would be fresh and he could gallop away and leave nothing but travois.

Abandoned travois would hardly please congressmen who expected results and an end to depredations; abandoned travois, and possibly some lice-eaten blankets, would not bring accolades on Cump Sherman's head nor Mackenzie's reputation.

The fatuous posturing of politicians who sat safe in the east had always annoyed Mackenzie; he had believed that he could bring back his tarantula in his saddle bags and quiet, for a time, the derision directed at Grant and the Army in the west. But now he was deep in Mexico, within a day's ride of a Mexican garrison and dangerously close to the Piedras, which he could not cross. He couldn't fight a battle with troopers who were almost too tired to reload, and the possibility existed that he might have to fight his way back to the States. He didn't know what his men would think when he ordered a countermarch back to the border without a break, with nothing to show for the campaign except some burned lodges and, perhaps, those abandoned travois. It was a lot to ask for thirteen dollars a month.

And it was a lot to give up after thirty-nine years of soldiering, with retirement just ahead. But those had been the orders—they stuck in his brain like a pick—and Sturgis, nor even Custer, could have done better. It was futile to create that comparison, which had as much validity as the argument over whether a glass was half-full or half-empty.

Mackenzie raised his chin and blinked; he'd almost fallen asleep under the steady chucking of hooves and the faint, quick ticking of his watch. He pulled his shoulders back and cleared his throat. In the distance ahead, Jimmie Deer squatted beside his mule, studying the ground.

When the column reached him, he waved an arm southward and mounted. "Satando, he turn here. Rio Piedras." There was more strength in Jimmie's voice. He smiled at Mackenzie.

"How far, now?"

"Mile, two mile. Other side tha' mesa."

Major Brace looked at the trail, working his chapped lips in and out, staring horribly. "Looks like Pennsylvania Avenue, Colonel."

"Well, let's go down it. Move on, Jimmie."

THE column picked it way cautiously through spreads of cactus and around treacherous cracks and sudden ravines edged with bladelike rocks. They would have to come back this way at night, and Mackenzie tried hard to memorize what he could. Then from the distance a scout shouted and a shot rang in the still air. The column came to its senses fast. They were off the east wall of the mesa, and the Piedras was in sight beyond. The score of troopers riding ahead on the remount ponies started converging toward the river. Mackenzie blinked furiously to clear his vision, then saw the tiny figures poised on the banks of the Piedras. His heart thumped.

"Gallop!" he cried, and the word was a hoarse bleat. "Keep formation!" There was no time now for the niceties of commands by the manual; it was a case of getting there first by any commmand.

"Jimmie—try to reach your scouts! Don't let 'em bunch up!"

Mackenzie jabbed his spurs and pulled out the Sharps. It held four rounds and all four would be fired at one target.

The scouts were galloping in a group toward the distant river; beyond a thousand yards they opened fire, and Mackenzie decided to kill them individually, with his bare hands. He tightened his teeth and cocked the Sharps; if anyone shot Satando, it would be himself.

The party at the river was starting to cross. Mackenzie could see the rafts fashioned from travois poles; some of the braves were plunging in mounted, hauling the rafts through the current with grass lines. A small rider sat waiting on a stocky white pony.

Mackenzie knew that pony. It had a star on its face and could run like a rabbit. He sighted and almost fired, then lowered the Sharps. He spurred his lagging horse again and whacked with his hand.

Satando calmly directed the braves on the bank to get out of sight behind it and return the fire. The galloping scouts slowed, broke apart, and cantered away to the right.

It was open ground now, sloping smoothly toward the river with few breaks and no cactus. Mackenzie waved the scouts on and they went forward at a canter, wide apart. He raised the Sharps for the first round, lost aim as the whinging sound of a bullet drew his ear, aimed again and lost the target. Satando was below the bank, the last to leave. When Mackenzie and the scouts reached the crossing, there weren't even travois to mark the spot.

(Continued on page 145)

Champions WEAR PURPLE

ILLUSTRATED BY JULIAN G. CHAMBERS

"Robertson!" the old man hollers. "Move your feet! Ride the ropes!"

By

CLIFTON ADAMS

ME AND about a dozen more roustabouts had just finished pulling casing on the old Woodard Wildcat, and my throat was as dry as an Arizona test hole. We made for Bert Harrison's Beer Hall. Long about the time I polished off my third mug of suds, and we was all laughing and joking and chewing the rag, in comes this here Kid.

The Kid's a big guy, shoulders a yard wide and just enough hips to keep his pants from

falling down. His blond hair was cut close to his skull and his face was sunburned pink as a baby's. But he wasn't no baby by a long shot.

He squinted around the room like a guy will when he has been in the sun for a long time, then he dumped an Army duffel-bag on the floor and beat the red dust from his pants. He was dusty and dirty, but he didnt have no oil on him so I knew he didn't work in any of the fields around—besides he had on a suit, leastwise, the pants to a suit. He carried the coat on his arm. If anybody had asked me, I'd said he just got out of a box-car.

He came up to the bar and stood next to me, me being on the end, and said to the bartender, "Can I have a glass of water, please?"

If there is anything I can't stand, it's seeing a thirsty man drinking water. I fished my change out of a puddle of suds. "Have a mug with me," I suggested.

The Kid smiled polite like. "Thank you very much. But I don't drink."

I don't suppose there's anything really wrong with a man who doesn't drink, it's just that I can't stand the sight of water. The Kid said he wouldn't mind having a coke with me. We talked for a few minutes about how hot it was, and how the corn crop was goin' plumb to hell if it didn't rain—and out of a clear sky he asked did I know a guy named Hank Winters.

The riggers next to me looked up interestedly. The people in Oiltown, Oklahoma had learned to let Hank Winters strictly alone.

I looked at the Kid again. I figured maybe I missed something the first going-over—but no, he was the same big blond guy with friendly, blue eyes. His mouth looked like it wanted to grin but his sunburn hurt too much. I wondered what connection he could have with Hank Winters. I remembered the time, about six months ago, when Winters first showed up in Oiltown.

Didn't nobody know anything about him. He just got off the train one day and took a room at Ma Howard's boarding house. When he first came down to the Beer Hall, the guys are naturally a little curious, but they don't ask no out-of-the-way questions. They just try to be friendly.

But Winters ain't havin' to do with nobody. The first time he came in the place, he jumped down Buck Connoly's throat and called him a lot of dirty names. And just because Buck offered to buy him a beer. Ordinarily, Buck would've broke a man in two for calling him names like that, but Winters was an old geezer, so Buck don't hit him, he just let him alone.

We all let him alone. And he don't speak to nobody except to cuss them. Every day he sits there at a table drinking suds and reading the out-of-town paper he gets in the mail—and, like I say, we let him strictly alone.

"Yeah," I said. "I know Winters—by name, that is." I pointed at the table Winters had come to regard as his private property. "That's him over there."

WINTERS had a New York paper spread out on the table, opened at the sports section. He had a face as hard as a drill bit, but there was a funny thing about it. From the top of his bald skull to where his scrawny neck disappeared into his collar, was one of the orneriest mugs I ever saw—except for his eyes. They looked kinda sad, like they was thinking about something.

The Kid grinned a little in spite of his sunburn. "He's just like Pete said," he mumbled, which don't make any sense at all to me. He picked up his coke and walked over to Winters' table. Me and the rest of the boys turned around to see the fireworks.

"Well!" the old boy barks, and the Kid's grin gets pretty weak.

"Mr. Winters," the Kid said, "my name is Lee Robertson. I was a pal of Pete's when we was in France, and he told me to look you up if anything happened to him. Pete thought you could make a fighter out of me." The Kid bogged down. He floundered around for a minute like a land-locked mud-cat. "And so," he grinned sort of weak, "here I am."

The color dropped out of Winters' face.

"You—you was with Pete—when he was killed?"

"Yes, sir," the Kid said. "Close to St. Denis in France."

Winters spoke so low I could barely hear him. "Pete—was killed—and you're still alive."

"Yes, sir," the Kid said uneasily. "Sometimes it happens that way, sir." The Beer Hall was quiet. Dead quiet.

I never saw such a look of hate in a man's face. It made me a little sick.

"Get out." Just those two words, but they carried more poison than a rattlesnake.

The Kid looked bewildered. He backed away, his lips white, not saying a word. Suddenly, he turned and marched to where his duffel-bag lay, picked it up, and walked out the door.

By habit, I don't go around sticking my bill in other people's business—in the oil fields that's unhealthy. But I had a feeling the Kid would want to talk to somebody.

I caught up with him halfway down the block. He had the heavy duffel-bag hoisted to his shoulder and was heading for the tracks. I made out like nothin' had happened.

"If you're looking for a job," I said, "I can get you on as roustabout with our crew. The work is hard but the pay is better than most jobs."

He slowed. I could see he was interested. The Blue Bell Cafe was at the end of the block, and I steered him into that. We took one of the back booths, one where the kitchen fan blew the smell of chili and fried onions in our faces, and ordered two black coffees.

I didn't prod the Kid, I just sat there and let him think. And the longer he thought the madder he got. He gripped the thick coffee mug until I expected to see the thing fly all to pieces. Then he let out.

"Who the hell does he think he is anyway!"

"Who do *you* think he is?" I ask, and explain there ain't anybody in Oiltown rightly know just who Hank Winters is. The Kid tells me. He talked with his lips tight, his blue eyes looking straight through the back of the booth.

It seems like Hank Winters is a fight manager. One of the best in the country—leastwise, until the war came along. But he never had a champion—not until one time when he was barnstorming the sticks, and he picked up a raw, green kid in the Oklahoma oil fields. He worked hard with this kid, and they was like

father and son. Finally, this kid, Pete Johnson, gets to be the light-heavy champ of the world, but before they can cash in on their hard work the war comes along and the champ gets killed.

Naturally, that would be a blow to anybody, but Winters goes off his nut about it. He is of the mind that with Pete, the only fighter in the world dies.

The Kid relaxes a little. "Pete showed me a lot of things about fighting," he said, "but he always said for me to come to Winters. And I had one hell of a time finding him. He just disappeared from New York. I had a hunch maybe he was back in Oklahoma, where Pete came from, but it took me four months of beating the bush to find him." His lips tightened. "And what did it get me?"

"A job," I said, my one-track brain goin' full blast. "And if you want to fight, there's the Arena with a regular Wednesday night card."

He thinks fast. "It's a deal," he says. "I'll take the job. And a fight, too, if I can."

I FIXED him up with a room in the City Hotel, where I lived, and the next day he goes out with the crew and I get him on as roustabout. The boys take to the Kid right away. He ain't afraid of work, and he catches on quick. The boys talk him up to Abe Shulman, the promoter at the Arena, and get him a preliminary bout with a Mex named Gonzales.

That fight was a lulu! The Kid wanted me in his corner, so when he entered the ring, I followed him carrying a bucket of water and a sponge—this being all I know about handling fighters. The air in the big barn-like Arena was solid with smoke, and as stale as a week-old glass of beer. Gonzales comes into the ring and the boys give him the big razz.

I followed the Kid to the center of the ring. The referee talks about no hittin' below the belt, and the Mex's handler feels the Kid's gloves and I feel the Mex's gloves, and we go back to the corner. Somebody whammed a brake-drum hanging on the side of the ring, and the Kid and the Mex was back in the middle.

They don't move too fast at first, just poking their lefts in each other's faces, light like. All of a sudden the Mex tears loose a screaming right that lands like a sledge against the Kid's jaw. I thought the Kid was a goner. He staggered and ducked his head in his shoulders like a turtle, and for the rest of the round the Mex whammed away, but all he hit was shoulders and elbows.

Back in the corner, the Kid grins at the boys and they whoop and holler. Then somebody whams the brake-drum again.

It started just like the other round. Both had their lefts out sparring around. Then, whoosh! The Mex's right zipped out again, cuttin' the air like a snake-whip. But the Kid was ready this time. He ducked under the fist, knocked it away with his left, then his right crashed the Mex's chin. The Mex looks like somebody hit him with a pipe wrench, then he dumped on his face like a sack of oats.

It really wasn't much of a fight—I've seen lots better in the Beer Hall. But the boys think it's terrific. They was only sorry there was nobody to bet with.

All I could hear the next week was the Kid. From the way the boys on the rig talked, you'd think the Kid was champeen of the world or something. Not that I cared, because I liked the Kid as much as anybody, and he never let it go to his head. Funny thing, though, he didn't seem to be very happy. I could see he was still worrying about Hank Winters and that ex-champion.

The Kid had another fight coming up, so we rigged up a punching bag in back of the hotel for him to limber up on. Sometimes when he was taking a breather, he'd say something about Pete Johnson. He'd show me how Pete told him to stand, and crouch, and move his feet; how to bob, and weave, and use his shoulders and elbows to knock off punches. I guess the Kid was just as crazy about Pete as old man Winters was.

The Kid won his next fight by a knock-out. And his next one. The guys on his crew strutted like turkey gobblers.

When the Kid won his first main bout, there was no holding the boys. They wanted to match him up with Joe Louis himself. They'd've bet their last nickel on the Kid, too. I guess everybody in town liked the Kid—everybody except Hank Winters, that is.

It seemed like Winters just couldn't stand the sight of him. If the Kid walked in the Beer Hall, Winters would look up like somebody hauled in a load of fertilizer; then he'd stomp out. He just didn't want to be near him.

That is the reason the boys was surprised to see Winters down at the Arena the night the Kid fought Sailor Hogan.

Me and the Kid was in the little canvas dressing room when we heard the boys holler and stomp. I guessed Sailor Hogan had entered the ring. The closest Sailor Hogan ever got to the ocean was the Waco oil fields, him bein' an oil field hand himself. For this reason, the boys don't give him the big razz like they do most of the time. The Sailor is a good boy and everybody expects a good fight. I threw an old purple robe around the Kid's shoulders and we headed for the ring. The boys raise such a ruckus and the smoke was so thick, I didn't see Winters until he stood up.

He stood in the middle of the aisle, blocking the Kid's way; his face pasty white, and his hands trembling. His voice was like a saw on bone.

"You cheap little punk!" he grated. "You're not good enough to wash Pete's feet." His bony hand shot out and snatched the old robe from the Kid's shoulders. "Did you wait until he was dead to steal his robe?" Hoarsely: "Only *champions* wear purple!" He shoved past the Kid like a blind man and made for the door—the robe with him.

The boys was so mad, they'd prob'ly strung Winters up if the Kid hadn't stepped in.

"Let him alone," the Kid told them. "I guess he's right."

THE BOYS couldn't get worked up much after that. The Kid won the fight, but not by a knockout like before. The boys blamed Winters. They wanted to get even, but they didn't know how. A guy couldn't go up to an old geezer like that and bust him in the nose. But it wasn't long before they got their chance.

The day after the Sailor Hogan fight Winters didn't show up at the Beer Hall. For over a week he didn't show up, and the boys figured maybe he'd gone back to New York, or wherever he's from. About the time we was congratulating ourselves, he comes back.

He comes in the Beer Hall like always, spreads his paper on the table and gets a beer. As usual, we was standing around the bar, and the talk turned to the Kid. Buck Connoly said he bet the Kid can whip any man in Oklahoma. That's when Winters speaks.

"There's a man in Hobartsville he can't whip," he says, not even looking up from his paper.

The boys are shocked. This is the first time they ever heard Winters speak unless to cuss somebody.

Buck comes to first. "I never seen this guy in Hobartsville," he said, "but I got fifty bucks that says the Kid can frail him like he was a pecan tree."

Winters pulls a roll out of his pocket that would choke a bull-snake and says, "That's a bet. Bert can hold the stakes."

Well, a derrick don't have to fall on the boys to let them know this is the chance they've been hollering for. Before I know what's goin' on, everybody in the place, including me, is sticking money in Winters' face, wantin' bets. And he takes all of it.

Every time anybody comes in for a beer, the first thing he hears is Winters is takin' bets there's a guy in Hobartsville that can whip the Kid. So he takes fifty or a hundred bucks' worth just for size. The spree was over about eight o'clock that night and we started checking up. It winds up that Bert was holdin' somethin' like ten thousand dollars. Five thousand for Winters, and five thousand for the boys. Up until now nobody had bothered to wonder what the Kid was goin' to think about all this. That's when the Kid comes in.

He's mad as blazes when he hears about it. Nobody ever seen the Kid mad before. They grin sickly, like kids caught smoking cornsilk, while he calls them fourteen kinds of damn fools.

"You are a bunch of suckers," the Kid says disgusted. "Don't you know that Winters knows more about fighters than everybody in this room put together? Any time he says one guy can whip another guy, it usually comes out that way." He glares at us. "Does anybody know who this guy is?"

We stand like a bunch of cranes, on one leg.

"Well," the Kid says, like he is talking to an idiot child, "does anybody know where the fight is supposed to be, or when?"

Everybody shifts legs. Buck speaks up, but not very loud. "We figured we'd have it down at the Arena next Wednesday," he said.

"That's dandy," the Kid says sarcastic. "I've got three whole days to get in condition."

"We think you look fine, Kid," Buck says. The Kid finally breaks down and grins.

"O.K., you lunkheads. It don't worry me none. It's your money."

But when we walked down to the hotel together, the Kid was serious. We walk for maybe two blocks not saying a word, then he blurts out, "For almost two years all I've thought about is to be a fighter, and to have Hank Winters handle me like he did Pete. Why does he hate me so much!"

I couldn't answer that, so we went on to the hotel in silence.

The next day we found out who this pistol in Hobartsville is. His name is Jack Muller and he is a driller for the Thompson Company there in Hobartsville. None of the boys ever heard of him, but the Kid had. He said Muller used to fight under the name of Tiger Muller around Chicago, and at one time he was contender for the light-heavy crown. But before he got a shot at it, he was in a scrape with the boxing commission and gets kicked out of the game.

Well, you can imagine how worked up the boys are about this fight. A lot of them have every penny they own ridin' the Kid.

The next three days the boys take care of the Kid like he's a new set of dishes. They won't let him get near the rig for fear somethin' will drop on him. And they're afraid he'll strain himself if he lifts anything. To tell the truth, between looking after the Kid and talking about the fight, there ain't much work done.

COMES Wednesday, it seemed like the whole town turned out. Abe Shulman was moanin' because there wasn't room for everybody, though he set up foldin' chairs in the aisles. And the boys are whooping it up in fine fashion, the bootleggers doin' a record business that day.

Me and the Kid stay in the dressin' room until the prelims are over. I don't know which is more nervous. The Kid fidgets around like he's sittin' on a stingin' weed, and I'm not much better. He knows the boys won't hold him to blame if he gets whipped, but he's not the kind to let that comfort him. And what has *he* got to win? If he loses, he loses money for just about everybody in town; and if he wins, any faint hope of ever gettin' Winters to handle him is gone. A guy ain't likely to take favor'bly to anybody that causes him to lose his whole bankroll.

We hear the boys holler when the prelims are over, so I pick up my bucket and sponge and we head for the ring.

Smoke rolled like a thunderhead, and from the smell of the place you'd think it was goin' to rain whiskey. The boys pound the Kid's back and tell how "we'll" murder this Hobartsville bum. He takes a beatin' before he ever gets in the ring.

I'm tellin' the Kid this Muller is goin' to be soft drillin', and the boys start hollering again and Muller comes down the aisle. Because Muller is also an oil field hand, they don't put up the big razz, but a few uncomplimentary remarks are passed at Winters who follows him.

This Muller's built like a Sherman tank. He ain't as tall as the Kid, but he spreads out all over the place; and it don't do any good to tell myself he's fat, because he ain't. He's got no forehead to speak of, and no neck at all. His head sets flat on his shoulders, his chin resting on his hairy chest. Little as I know about fighting, I can see it's goin' to take a sleight-of-hand artist to lay a glove on that chin.

"Don't worry, Kid," I says. "That bum ain't got a chance." This sounds pretty ridiculous, even to me.

Jeff Waterbury, the referee, holds up his hand for the boys to be quiet. They settle down for a minute, but when he mentions the Kid's name they bust loose again. Jeff saves his vocal chords and calls to the center.

Muller gave a yellow-toothed grin as Jeff recited the rules. Winters' face don't show a thing. They shake hands and we go back to our corner. There was so much noise I almost missed the brake-drum. The Kid slid into the middle of the ring.

Muller didn't slide out like the Kid; he stalked. Stalked like a hunter, carrying two club-sized fists in front of him. The Kid danced around lightly, keeping his left in Muller's face. Muller brushed the glove away like he would a fly. So far he hadn't thrown a punch. The Kid danced to one side, then the other. He stings Muller's eye with his left. The boys holler. The Kid looks good. He got two more lefts in Muller's face, then shoved his right. Muller exploded.

Like pistons, his thick arms thudded against the Kid's ribs, reeling him back. Quickly, the Kid covered up, trying to back out, but the heavy fists kept pounding. He's on the ropes. A smash in the guts doubled him, a right splattered blood. His knees sagged and the gong sounded.

I helped the Kid back to his corner. There was a long cut over his right eye. Blood covered that side of his face and the eye was closing fast. Raw welts covered his ribs. He grinned.

"Remind me not to leave myself open any more," he wheezed.

I tried to act like everything was all right, but I was scared about that cut. I cussed myself for ever taking the job. I tried to put adhesive tape over the eye but it wouldn't stick. The brake-drum clanged and the Kid was back in the middle.

The Kid learned something that first round. He keeps covered. And his left begins to look like part of Muller's face. The boys find their voices again.

The Kid was pretty chipper when he came back to the corner. I was glad to see his eye had stopped bleeding. I wiped his face and pulled his trunks out so he could breathe better. "Nice goin', Kid," I says.

The Kid grins, saving his breath.

Muller was plenty mad when they came out for the third. He don't like all that leather in his mush, and he don't waste any time lettin' the Kid know it. He comes in fast, beats the Kid's left aside to get in close. It's like cats in a barrel, it happens so fast. I don't see it all, but when Jeff breaks it up, the Kid's eye is bleeding again; blood drips from his nose.

He holds Muller off with his left. But not for long. Muller takes a dozen in the face to get close. Like a bull-dozer, he shoves the Kid against the ropes. Thick arms hold him in, elbows smash his ribs. A knee jerks up in the Kid's groin, and he turns green. He drops his guard. Glove heels start hacking his face to hamburger.

Jeff grabbed Muller and spun him around. The Kid hung on the ropes, sagged, and dropped to his knees. Jeff started the count. "One . . . two . . . three—" The Kid pulled himself up and stood reeling, his guard down. Muller charged in like a bull and crashed a hard right to the jaw. The Kid dropped again as the bell rang.

I dragged the Kid back to the corner. He looked like he stuck his head in a meat grinder. His right eye was closed and the left one cut and swelling. He's as limp as wet spaghetti. I wished I was home.

I took out his mouth-piece and poured water inside his trunks—he moved. I poured water on his head and he spewed. Jeff bent over my shoulder and looked at the Kid's bloody face.

"Let's call it a day's work, huh, Kid?"

That brought him out of it better'n water. "No!" he hollered, only it ain't a holler. It's more like a sick horse coughing. "We'll call it a day's work when you count somebody out."

Jeff shrugged and shook his head again. "O.K., Kid, if that's the way you want it."

I COULD give you what the radio boys call a blow-by-blow description of that fight, but I don't like to remember it. This Muller is the dirtiest fighter I ever seen, outside of B-picture villains. But he's slick. He always gets the Kid in a corner or on the ropes before he gives him the knees or elbow, or laces. A lot of the boys don't see it. And Jeff don't see it—but I do, and Winters does. That strikes me funny at the time. When the Kid got the knee treatment I happened to be looking at Winters. He almost busts, he's so mad—and I couldn't figure why. I figured he's puttin' Muller up to this rough-house. When Muller got to his corner, I saw Winters working on him like a run-a-way phonograph, givin' him holy hell.

But I got no time to think about that. I do what I can for the Kid. At the end of the seventh I don't see what's holdin' him up. There ain't a man in the house that expects him to take a beatin' like that, no matter how much money they got on him. His right eye was closed as tight as the Pearly Gates to a roughneck. And the left one not much better.

Muller don't look so good himself. For seven rounds he has been pounding away at the Kid, hittin' him with everything but the ring-side chairs. He's puffin'. And he's worried. He's used every alley-brawl trick in the books, except maybe a knife, and the Kid is still in there. I admit he ain't doin' much, but he's still in there.

I poured the last of my water on the Kid's head and shoved him out for the eighth. He staggers like a blind man, which he almost is. From somewhere he gets strength to move his feet as Muller comes charging in for the kill. There's no mistake about it this time, Muller's out to end it.

The Kid gets two good lefts in Muller's face. and Muller slips away. He comes up on the Kid's blind side and lands a jarring left on the ear. The Kid staggers and Muller comes bulling in, shoving, jabbing, until he has the Kid bottled up in his own corner. Then he starts the elbows and laces. Over their shoulders I can see Winters' face. white as a miller's cap. He's practically breathing on them, he's that close. He can see every elbow the Kid gets. Suddenly, he opens his mouth, and I can hear him clear over in my corner.

"Robertson!" he hollers. "Move your feet! Ride the ropes! Come on, move out! Set 'im up with the left!"

I never hear such jabber. I think maybe the old man has gone off his nut. But somethin' happens there in the ring. Somehow, the Kid gets out of that corner. Where he got the strength, I don't know—but he's on his toes. And there's a bloody grin on his face.

Muller is stunned. He comes in cautiously, guard up. The Kid feints to the left—the right—dances around. His left flashes out hard and kicks Muller's face. Muller throws a screaming right. The Kid dances, and the fist grazes his head. His own right crashes Muller's jaw, snapping it back. Like a tiger the Kid is on top of him cracking lefts and rights on the bullet head. Muller's eyes go to glass. He sags. The Kid follows the falling body to the canvas. Lefts and rights! Lefts and rights! Muller thumps the canvas and is still.

The noise is terrific!

Rubber-legged, the Kid makes it to the corner and falls on the stool. I see it's no use to worry about Muller, so I climb in with him and wipe his face. Somebody rams me with an elbow. "Get out of the way, you fool."

It's Winters! He opens a little black bag and goes to work. In no time he has the Kid's face clean and the bleeding stopped. I stand there with my mouth open.

"You!" Winters barks. "Get these idiots out of the way while we get him to the dressin' room."

I don't understand it, but I plow a path to the dressin' room and stand guard while Winters patches the Kid.

"Who ever told you you was a fighter?" Winters snarls.

The Kid winced as he pulled a cut together. "Nobody—except maybe Pete."

Finally I couldn't keep quiet any longer. "What the hell was all that jabber about?" I bust out.

"That's the way Pete used to yell at me," the Kid says. "He said I stood in one place too long. Pete said—"

"Shut up," Winters says. "How can I sew you up when you're runnin' off at the mouth?"

I had one more question to ask, if it killed me. "How," I says to Winters, "do you figure your percentage? The way I figure it, you lost five thousand bucks tonight by hollerin' at the Kid."

He gives me a look that would frost a stream coil, then he backs off and looks at his work.

"That's all," he says. Then, like it was an afterthought, he pulls the old purple robe from his bag and tosses it to the Kid. "Put this on," he snaps. "You'll catch cold." He fiddles around in his bag. "Just like Pete," he growls. "All guts and no sense."

The Kid grins the best he can with that face, and pulls the robe around his shoulders. "Thanks," he says. "Maybe—maybe some day it'll fit."

ASK ADVENTURE

Information You Can't Get Elsewhere

TROOPERS North.

Query:—Can you give me some data on the history, duties and traditions of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and also a summary of the requirements for enlistment therein?

—George Weideman
Provolt, Ore.

Reply by H. S. M. Kemp:—The present-day Royal Canadian Mounted Police had its inception in 1873, under the title of the North-West Mounted Police. Its function was to bring law-and-order to that vast stretch of Western and Northern Canada known as the North-West Territories. In 1904 it was granted the prefix "Royal," and from then on became popularly known as the R.N.W.M.P. In 1905, after the Provinces were set up, it policed Alberta and Saskatchewan, and in 1918 all of Canada west of Port Arthur and Fort William was given into its charge.

In 1920, its scope was broadened again. All of Canada came under its jurisdiction, its title was changed again, this time to that of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, it absorbed the old Dominion Police and its headquarters, long established at Regina in Saskatchewan, was transferred to Ottawa. Today, it enforces a large number of Federal and Provincial statutes, among them being the Excise Act, the Indian Act, the Juvenile Delinquent Act, the Opium and Narcotic Drug Act, etc. It patrols Government Buildings and shipyards, and is the sole police force in the Yukon and the North-West Territories. In these two latter localities, its men perform a large variety of duties, from patrol work to the collection of customs duties.

The Force is at present controlled by the Minister of Justice, and while I cannot give you the exact figures today, its strength on March 31st, 1944 was 4470, with a reserve of 599 located in the larger cities. This against the 300 of all ranks who made up the N.W.M.P. at its inception. It has been streamlined, too, to meet present-day requirements. While the 1944 statistics show that 141 saddle horses and 302 sleigh-dogs are counted on strength, 839 motor vehicles are also mentioned. During the war, its Marine Section of 32 vessels and its Aviation Section of 4 aircraft and personnel were handed over to the Royal Canadian Navy and the R.C.A.F. respectively, but I saw mention in the newspapers the other day where the Force had taken to the air again. During the war, too, it sent a Provost Company of 185 men overseas.

To be definite, and to stave off possible criticism, I might say that while the R.C.M.P. have detachments in Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia, these only enforce Federal Statutes. The provinces mentioned have their own police forces to enforce provincial laws.

Whole volumes have been written on the history of the Mounted Police, but the work I like best is "The Royal Canadian Mounted Police," by R. C. Featherstonhaugh, and published by Carrick and Evans, New York. Perhaps you can get hold of this. You'll find it interesting reading and not too statistical.

The requirements for enlistment in the R. C. M. Police are as follows—

1. Applicant must be a British subject, resident in Canada.
2. Age not less than 21 years and not more than 30 years.
3. Must be unmarried.
4. Height not less than 5′ 8″ in socks.
5. Weight between 5′ 8″ and 6′ 1″ not more than 185 pounds. Over the height of 6′ 1″ not more than 200 pounds.

6. Must speak, read and write either English or French language.

7. Must be able to pass a rigid medical examination which conforms with the R. C. M. Police standard.

8. Must attain a pass mark in educational and aptitude tests as approved by the Commissioner.

9. Proof of age must be produced together with proof of education which must not be less than graduation from Grade 10.

10. Married men will not be engaged. Six years of service is necessary before permission to marry is granted, and the member must then have $500 in cash or convertible assets.

11. All applicants must produce two certificates of character and be prepared to be fingerprinted, such records to become the property of the R. C. M. Police.

12. The first engagement of an applicant is for 5 years.

THE Thicket and the Bend of Texas—both Big.

Query:—What can you tell me about the "Big Thicket" country of east Texas? Have you ever heard of such a place? I have been told that this is one of the wildest remaining sections of the whole United States! If so, how do I get there?

Another section I would like to learn more about is the "Big Bend Country" down the Rio Grande from El Paso. Any information you can give me on either of these sections will be much appreciated.

—James F. Ayres,
223-5 W. 46th St.,
N. Y. C., N. Y.

Reply by J. W. Whiteaker:—The Big Thicket is a not very definitely bounded area in the Southern part of the East Texas Forest Region, so called because of the heavy vegetation. This Thicket covers a part of about 12 counties in south-east Texas, extending as far north as Nacogdoches County. The name Big Thicket at the present day is only justified in the relatively limited areas centering in north Hardin County and southern Polk and Tyler Counties with branches extending into San Jacinto, Liberty, and Montgomery Counties. Its total area is about 2,000,000 acres.

Prevailing timbers are white oak, water oak, black jack, black gum, cypress, willow. Magnolia, palmetto, water lily, hyacinth, and rare orchids are found. The wild grape, wandering jew and many other types of vines form a jungle almost impossible to penetrate. Hence its isolation.

Wild life includes black bear, bob cat, lynx, panther, deer, turkey, beaver, otter, and many others. There are several varieties of squirrel and some rare forms of bird life. The principal inhabitants are trappers and hunters.

About 250 Alabamas and Coushattis live on a 4,280 acre-reservation in the eastern part of Polk County in the midst of the Big Thicket, Livingston, county seat of Polk Co. is the nearest town to the Indian reservation. The Indians still speak their native tongue and retain many tribal customs. You can reach the Big Thicket area by bus, train, or in a car as much of the eastern section of the state has hard-surface highways.

The Big Bend Country is made up principally of Presidio and Brewster Counties where the Rio Grande River makes its bend below Alpine. Elevation of plateau from 2000 feet at the Rio Grande to 4500 in northern part with mountains rising over 7000 feet, the Chisos being the chief range. Rainfall from 10 to 15 inches in the lower sections while in the mountains it is often as much as 20 inches per year. Summers usually cool due to altitude while the winters are relatively mild due to the sunshine.

Cattle raising and mining are the chief industries. Many acres in the valley lands are rich and very productive where irrigation is practised. In the mountains there is a great variety of game animals to be found among the yucca, lechuguilla, greasewood, ocotillo, cacti, guayule, pine, oak, junipers, candillilla and some coarse grasses on the level plateau lands. Quicksilver, silver, lead, and a few other minor minerals are mined in quantities.

Alpine and Marfa on the north edge, the principal commercial centers, are reached by bus, train and by car over a hard-surface highway.

BLOODED stock from Naziland.

Query:—What can you tell me about the horses the U.S. Government captured from the Germans recently? (a) What breeds were brought to the U.S.A.? (b) What diposition has been made or will be made of them? (c) To what places have these horses been allocated?

—W. G. McComb
P. O. Box 845
Seminole, Okla.

Reply by John Richard Young:—The blood horses which the Army Remount recently imported from Germany were taken as spoils of war from the Wehrmacht, most of them; some were requisitioned from German citizens and paid for under reparations agreement at the German figure by the Military Government.

(a) The total number of horses taken out of Germany is approximately 250; maybe a few more or less. Most of them are Thoroughbreds. The next largest group is the Halfbreds—about 37 animals—followed in order by purebred Arabians (18), great-Arabs (16), Lippizaners (9). The groups include stallions, mares, colts, fillies. These horses represent the cream of the German remount service; and since the German government has been in the scientific

horse-breeding business for centuries, and summarily appropriated the best breeding stock in countries overrun by Germany's armed forces, as well as confiscating such studs as those of Rothschild, a Jew, and the Aga Khan, a British subject, the bloodlines represented by these horses now in America are among the best in the world, a product of centuries of scientific horse management backed by billions of dollars.

(b) These horses will be used as Remount breeding stock in the United States, infusing blood into horses here which probably could not otherwise ever have been obtained. According to a memorandum from Colonel F. L. Hamilton, Chief of the U. S. Army Remount Service, "some twenty heads imported from Germany will be included" in a public auction of about 200 Remount mares, stallions and young horses of various ages at the Front Royal, Virginia, Remount Depot, sometime this month (October)—"dates to be announced later." Colonel Hamilton adds, "Their pedigrees will be announced, but they will *probably* be sold without American Stud Book Registration Certificates." This does *not* mean that about 200 horses will be auctioned off at Front Royal only. Public auctions will also be held at Fort Reno, Oklahoma; Fort Robinson, Nebraska. But the German-bred horses will be at Front Royal only. These horses are not being offered for sale as surplus war property or as condemned army horses, but simply because the Remount Service is overstocked just now because of the importations from Germany and because of the decrease in use of horses by our army.

(c) These horses have been, or will be, allocated as follows: Some Thoroughbreds to Fort Robinson, others retained at Front Royal; Halfbreds to Fort Reno; Arabians, grade-Arabs and Lippizaners to the Remount Depot at Pomona, California. From these points the stallions, and the colts as they mature, will be assigned to civilian agents throughout the country under the Remount Horse-Breeding Plan. Mares and fillies will be kept at various depots for breeding.

THE beach placers at Nome.

Query:—I have been told various stories about the gold values in the gravel under the shallow water off the beach at Nome, Alaska. I understand it is impossible to mine this gravel because of the rough water. I have been able to find books with data on the gravel on the beach and back in the mountains, but nothing beyond the water's edge.

I will try and be specific in my queries so you will know what I am trying to find out.

1) Would the gravel have commercial values if one were able to handle it in large quantities? If so, is it very fine and hard to save?

2) What is the depth of the gravel, and what is the boulder content from 6" up?

3) Does the water freeze over in winter? If so, to what depth? To what distance from shore does it freeze, and for how many months per year? I understand the ice is very rough. Is this true? Does the ice shift to any extent?

Any additional information you can give me will be greatly appreciated.

I have developed a new system of placer mining which has great possibilities and may be adaptable to the beach at Nome.

—Edward A. Parr
419 Leland Ave.
Palo Alto, Calif.

Reply by Victor Shaw:—Sure—you'll hear all kinds of yarns about Nome beach placers, a lot of which stem from guys who were never there, and too many of them also are just plain fairy tales with no basis in fact. But, getting down to cases: I judge from your letter that what is bothering you is that you don't yet sabe just what a "beach placer" is? You show this by the way you talk about the gravels, but until you understand how this type of placer gold is formed (also, where the Nome beach gold originated) you'll be all mixed up no matter what stories you hear, true or false.

All right then—there have been many such placers up in different parts of Alaska, most of them worked out, but one or two still in shape to yield a little gold between tides. And there you have it: the possible rough water you mention at Nome (or elsewhere) has little to do with working such deposits, because they can only be worked at all at the intervals of *lowest* tide, which gives you a few hours till you're run out by the rising tide. Of course, a stiff in-shore wind with a heavy swell would drive you out quicker, at that. However, the fact is that all of these beach placers are concentrations of a temporary nature formed entirely by *wave-action!* They're formed and reformed on each daily tide but the best time to work them is *after* a long storm or series of gales.

At Nome, the first of such placers were those bared and buried by each tide and right on the water's edge. Later the "2nd-beach" was found, and after that the 3d and 4th beach placers. All these last were deeper gravels and were left when the whole coast there gradually lifted and so left them high and dry. These have all been worked out long ago, but not many years ago it was found that the water-edge placers had been reformed and there was a small rush, with diggers making up to $10.00 a day.

To make sure you sabe what "wave-action" is, I judge you've been inside a gold mill and looked around—well, the gold is concentrated in long thin strips parallel to the beachline, in the same way exactly that the ore is concentrated on a Wilfley table. The side bumb and end-bumb of the table keeps the different metals in line according to their specific gravity which the water flowing down

over on the tilt also keeps exact and cleanly separated from the lighter and heavier metals beside 'em.

Same way on a beach. The constant washing in and over this fine gold by each wave, with the added jar given when the waves land, acts as a natural concentrator. BUT, the next tide may wipe it out, or some time even cover it all up with sand. This layer of fine gold, and you'll get or see few if any nuggets of any size, doesn't get very deep by the very nature of things; that is, so much movement at short intervals. In working these gravels in early days rockers were used, also short sluices. And one notable item about the Nome beach placers is that they all were characterized by the *ruby* colors caused by the garnets mixed with gold.

A chief point, too, is where did this gold come from—where was its source? In the beach sands? Out in the bay somewhere? Or, where? Well, it all came and still is coming from gold-bearing seams, stringers, crevices and innumerable small veinlets *lying inland!* In behind all of the beaches, and brought out via the various creeks and rivers flowing into the Nome bay, especially during spring high-water. But the tides catch this gold brought into salt water, before it has time to really get settled, and flings it up on the beaches to be washed back and forth to be gathered and concentrated, then washed away and scattered wide only to be again concentrated in a red-gold ribbon along those beaches, by wave-action entirely. Big dredges have been working inland on these back creeks making big cleanups for the past 25 years. All Nome gold has come from these crevices for the length of time stated. A queer thing is that although these thousands of tiny gold stringers have supplied all the bullion produced at Nome for all this time, *none* of them have ever been found big enough to make a gold mine by itself! This is one of the oddities of the Seward Peninsula geology.

Now for your three direct questions: The first is I think answered by my foregoing explanations as to the nature of these beach gravels. You can't get gravel-volume, and lots of the gold has been lost because too fine for rockers or sluices, or in later years some new-fangled gold machines.

The first part of this letter also explains and answers your second query as to gravel depth, boulders, etc. Fact is there are not so many boulders of any size on those beaches.

Now for question 3: You're daggone tooting Nome bay freezes over in winter and every winter, and the ice is thick enough for tractors or bull dozers or heavier weights to cross, being 6 or 8 up to 10 ft. thick. And it freezes the whole bay area, so far out that steamers arriving too early in late May or early June can't get it at all, nor can lighters do any unloading until that thick bay ice is tide-broken and scattered wide. Nome is an open port only about 3 months in mid-summer. No, the bay ice isn't necessarily rough on surface, in fact it usually is very smooth and is covered by many layers of snow-ice atop the sea ice. This is the winter highway for everybody up there as far as Kotzebue and beyond, for sledge work always, and in later years for planes equipped with skis. This ice once frozen is fixed and immovable until the following spring break-up.

This is a big subject and I'm here giving you only the high points that are related to your present questions and problem. But, from the type of questions you ask, I can see what you have in mind, and while you might hit on some new idea that works, the best engineers and mining men in the region have puzzled over the same problem before the 1920s.

However, one guy did get a new idea and so far as I heard he made it work at a plenty high profit too. Here's what he did:

First though I want to say you'll not find much gold out very far beyond low-tide mark, along a straight beachline. However, if there is a cover causing sea currents, they affect the gold in suspension very like the gold carried down by a river current. Thus, behind a point or small cape, there can be a heavier and rather permanent concentration that is built out beyond low-tide and is not affected then by daily tidal action. Is this clear? O.K.—

Such a place exists south of Nome Beach at a small place marked on the map as *Bluff*. There was a small stampede there about 1901, after the first big rush to Nome occurred. And those beach sands, with also the river sands as well, were very very rich and lots of moola was made by the lucky stiffs that first found it. So, Bluff was mined and worked out and abandoned, until just a few years ago—just before the last war started.

This guy had been sizing up the topography at Bluff and thought he saw a good chance for a big cleanup. Nobody had noticed how the bay shore currents set around there, but he saw something. So, he took it in wintertime, and used ice-saws and enough labor, so that he sawed a wide channel from out beyond the point in toward the river mouth. Then he set up a dragline outfit, and just scraped out the bay bottom there and piled it up to form a stock pile to wash out next summer. To cut it short, his idea was perfect, that gravel was lousy with gold, much of it coarse from the river, and he sure did clean up plenty. I've not heard about him since.

This is what I mean by a possible new idea? Does it interest you? However, as you must realize, you've got to know placers, how they are formed and have plenty of practical experience beside to evolve such ideas. Most of the old-timers never would think of anything like the above.

Whadda ya mean—you have a new system of placer mining????

ASK ADVENTURE EXPERTS

THE ASK ADVENTURE SERVICE is free, provided self-addressed envelope and FULL POSTAGE for reply are enclosed. Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries must enclose International Reply Coupons, which are exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union.

Send each question *direct* to the expert in charge of the section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. **Do Not** send questions to the magazine. Be definite; explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question. The magazine does not assume any responsibility. **No Reply** will be made to requests for partners, financial backing or employment.

★*(Enclose addressed envelope with International Reply Coupon.)*

SPORTS AND HOBBIES

Archery—EARL B. POWELL, care of *Adventure*.

Baseball—FREDERICK LIEB, care of *Adventure*.

Basketball—STANLEY CARHART, 99 Broad St., Matawan, N. J.

Big Game Hunting in North America: *Guides and equipment*—A. H. CARHART, c/o *Adventure*.

Boxing—COL. JEAN V. GROMBACH, care of *Adventure*.

Camping—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Coins and Medals—WILLIAM L. CLARK, American Numismatic Society, Broadway at 156th, N. Y. C.

Dogs—FREEMAN LLOYD, care of *Adventure*.

Fencing—COL. JEAN V. GROMBACH, care of *Adventure*.

First Aid—DR. CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, care of *Adventure*.

Fishing: *Fresh water; fly and bait casting; bait casting outfits; fishing trips*—JOHN ALDEN KNIGHT, 929 W. 4th St., Williamsport, Penna.

Fishing, Salt water: *Bottom fishing, surf casting; trolling; equipment and locations*—C. BLACKBURN MILLER, care of *Adventure*.

Fly and Bait Casting Tournament—"CHIEF" STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Maine

Health-Building Activities, Hiking — DR. CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, care of *Adventure*.

Horses and Horsemanship—JOHN RICHARD YOUNG, 3225 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee 8, Wis.

Motor Boating—GERALD T. WHITE, Montville, N. J.

Motorcycling: *Regulations, mechanics, racing*—CHARLES M. DODGE, care of *Adventure*.

Mountain Climbing—THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 6320 Romaine St., Hollywood, Calif.

Old Songs—ROBERT WHITE, 913 W. 7th St., Los Angeles, Calif.

Rifles, Pistols, Revolvers: *Foreign and American*—DONEGAN WIGGINS, 170 Liberty Rd., Salem, Oregon.

Shotguns, American and Foreign: Wing Shooting and Field Trials—ROY S. TINNEY, Chatham, New Jersey.

Small Boating: *Skiffs, outboard, small launch, river and lake cruising*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, 11331 Burin Ave., Inglewood, Calif.

Swimming—LOUIS DEB. HANDLEY, 115 West 11th St., N. Y., N. Y.

Swords, Spears, Pole Arms and Armor—MAJOR R. E. GARDNER, care of *Adventure*.

Track—JACKSON SCHOLZ, R. D. No. 1, Doylestown, Pa.

Woodcraft—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Wrestling—MURL E. THRUSH, New York Athletic Club, 59th St. and 7th Ave., N. Y., N. Y.

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS

Anthropology: *American, north of the Panama Canal, customs, dress, architecture; pottery and decorative arts, weapons and implements, fetishism, social divisions*—ARTHUR WOODWARD, Los Angeles Museum, Exposition Park, Los Angeles, Calif.

Entomology: *Insects and spiders; venomous and disease-carrying insects*—DR. S. W. FROST, 465 E. Foster Ave., State College, Penna.

Forestry, North American: *The U. S. Forestry Service, our national forests, conservation and use*—A. H. CARHART, c/o *Adventure*.

Forestry, Tropical: *Tropical forests and products*—WM. R. BARBOUR, care of U. S. Forest Service, Glenn Bldg., Atlanta, Ga.

Herpetology: *Reptiles and amphibians*—CLIFFORD H. POPE, care of *Adventure*.

(Continued on following page)

Mining, Prospecting, and Precious Stones: *Anywhere in North America. Prospectors' outfitting; any mineral, metallic or non-metallic*—VICTOR SHAW, care of *Adventure*.

Ornithology: *Birds, their habits and distribution*—DAVIS QUINN, 5 Minerva Pl., Bronx, N. Y.

Photography: *Outfitting, work in out-of-the way places; general information*—PAUL L. ANDERSON, 36 Washington St., East Orange, N. J.

Radio: *Telegraphy, telephony, history, receiver construction, portable sets*—DONALD MCNICOL, care of *Adventure*.

Railroads: *In the United States, Mexico and Canada*—R. T. NEWMAN, 701 N. Main St., Paris, Ill.

Sawmilling:—HAPSBURG LIEBE, care of *Adventure*.

Sunken Treasure: *Treasure ships; deep-sea diving; salvage operations and equipment*—LIEUTENANT HARRY E. RIESENBERG, care of *Adventure*.

Taxidermy—EDWARD R. LANG, 14 N. Burnett St., East Orange, N. J.

Wildcrafting and Trapping—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, 11331 Burin Ave., Inglewood, Calif.

MILITARY, NAVAL AND POLICE

United States Army—COL. R. G. EMERY, U.S.A., Ret., care of *Adventure*.

Military Aviation—O. B. MYERS, care of *Adventure*.

Federal Investigation Activities—*Secret Service, Immigration, Customs, Border Patrol, etc.*—FRANCIS H. BENT, care of *Adventure*.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police—*Its history, duties and tradition*—H. S. M. KEMP, 501 10th St., E., Prince Albert, Sask.

The French Foreign Legion—GEORGES SURDEZ, care of *Adventure*.

State Police—FRANCIS H. BENT, care of *Adventure*.

GEOGRAPHICAL SUBJECTS

Philippine Islands—BUCK CONNER, Conner Field, Quartzsite, Ariz.

★New Guinea—L. P. B. ARMIT, care of *Adventure*.

★New Zealand, Cook Island, Samoa—TOM L. MILLS, 27 Bowen St., Feilding, New Zealand.

★Australia and Tasmania—ALAN FOLEY, 243 Elizabeth St., Sydney Australia

★South Sea Islands—WILLIAM MCCREADIE, No. 1 Flat "Scarborough," 83 Sidney Rd., Manley N. S. W., Australia.

Madagascar—RALPH LINTON, Dept. of Anthropology, Columbia University, N. Y., N. Y.

Africa, Part 1 ★*Libya, Morocco, Egypt, Tunis, Algeria, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*—CAPT. H. W. EADES, 3808 West 26th Ave., Vancouver, B. C. **2** Abyssinia, Italian Somaliland, British Somali Coast Protectorate, Eritrea, Uganda, Tanganyika, Kenya—GORDON MACCREAGH, care of *Adventure*. **3** *Tripoli, Sahara caravans*—CAPTAIN BEVERLY-GIDDINGS, care of *Adventure*. **4** *Bechuanaland, Southwest Africa, Angola, Belgian Congo, Egyptian Sudan and French West Africa*—MAJOR S. L. GLENISTER, care of *Adventure*. **5** ★*Cape Province, Orange Free State, Natal, Zululand, Transvaal, Rhodesia*—PETER FRANKLIN, Box 1491, Durban, Natal, So. Africa.

Asia, Part 1 ★*Siam, Malay States, Straits, Settlements, Java, Sumatra, Dutch East Indies, Ceylon*—V. B. WINDEL, care of *Adventure*. **4** *Persia, Arabia*—CAPTAIN BEVERLY-GIDDINGS, care of *Adventure*. **5** ★*Palestine*—CAPTAIN H. W. EADES, 3808 West 26th Ave., Vancouver, B. C.

Europe, Part 1 ★*The British Isles*—THOMAS BOWEN PARTINGTON, Constitutional Club, Northumberland Ave., London, W.C. 2, England **2** *Denmark, Germany, Scandinavia*—G. I. COLBRON, care of *Adventure*.

Central America—ROBERT SPIERS BENJAMIN, care of *Adventure*.

South America, Part 1 *Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Chile*—EDGAR YOUNG, care of *Adventure*.

★West Indies—JOHN B. LEFFINGWELL, Box 1333, Nueva Gerona, Isle of Pines, Cuba.

Iceland—G. I. COLBRON, care of *Adventure*.

Baffinland and Greenland—VICTOR SHAW, care of *Adventure*.

Labrador—WILMOT T. DEBELL, care of *Adventure*.

Mexico, Part 1 *Northern Border States*—J. W. WHITEAKER, 2908 San Gabriel St., Austin, Tex. **2** *Quintana Roo, Yucatan Campeche*—CAPTAIN W. RUSSELL SHEETS, care of *Adventure*.

Canada, Part 1 ★*Southeastern Quebec*—WILLIAM MACMILLAN, 89 Laurentide Ave., Quebec, Canada. **3** *Ottawa Valley and Southeastern Ontario*—HARRY M. MOORE, 579 Isabella, Pembroke Ont., Canada. **4** ★*Georgian Bay and Southern Ontario, National Parks Camping* — A. D. L. ROBINSON, 103 Wembly Rd. (Forest Hill), Toronto, Onto., Canada. **5** ★*Yukon, British Columbia and Alberta*—C. PLOWDEN, Plowden Bay, Howe Sound, B. C. **6** ★*Northern Saskatchewan; Indian life and language, hunting, trapping*—H. S. M. KEMP, 501 10th St., E., Prince Albert, Sask.

Alaska—THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 6520 Romaine St., Hollywood, Calif.

Western U. S., Part 1 *Pacific Coast States*—FRANK WINCH, care of *Adventure*. **3** *New Mexico; Indians, etc.*—H. F. ROBINSON, 720 W. New York Ave., Albuquerque, N. M. **4** *Nevada, Montana and Northern Rockies*—FRED W. EGELSTON, Elks' Home, Elko, Nev. **5** *Idaho and environs*—R. T. NEWMAN, 701 N. Main St., Paris, Ill. **6** *Arizona, Utah*—C. C. ANDERSON, Holbrook Tribune-News, Holbrook, Arizona. **7** *Texas, Oklahoma*—J. W. WHITEAKER, 2908 San Gabriel St., Austin, Tex.

Middle Western U. S., Part 2 *Ohio River and Tributaries and Mississippi River*—GEO. A. ZERR, 31 Cannon St., Pittsburgh, 5, Penna. **3** *Lower Mississippi from St. Louis down, Louisiana swamps, St. Francis. Arkansas Bottom*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, 11331 Burin Ave., Inglewood, Calif.

Eastern U. S. Part 1 *Maine*—"CHIEF" STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Me. **2** *Vt., N. H., Conn., R. I., Mass.*—HOWARD R. VOIGHT, P. O. Box 716, Woodmont, Conn. **3** *Adirondacks, New York*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, 11331 Burin Ave., Inglewood, Calif. **5** *Ala., Tenn., Miss., N. C.; S. C., Fla., Ga.*—HAPSBURG LIEBE, care of *Adventure*. **6** *The Great Smokies and Appalachian Mountains south of Virginia*—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

(Continued from page 8)

27 years has been spent in and around the Oklahoma oil fields—and believe me, anything can happen in them, anything. Being a fight fan of long standing, I have often wondered what the outcome would be in a tussle between a top-notch boxer and a Rough old-field roustabout. (I didn't cap that *Rough* accidentally.) If anybody knows of a fight like that I'd certainly like to hear about it.

A final word, speaking of fight fans. In the I-think-Joe-Louis-is-the-greatest-fighter-who-ever-lived school, I stand at the head of the class. Joe's my boy. He's terrific, colossal, and all the other superlatives I can think of. I have serious doubts that even a roustabout could beat him—*but I wouldn't be surprised.*

Frankly we're delighted Mr. Adams has forsaken the rosewood sticks and the tautened parchment for the alphabet keys and the paper-covered platen. The story's the thing and Gene Krupa's racket nothing but snare and delusion!

AS A FOOTNOTE to accompany "Datu's Dividend" on page 60, E. Hoffmann Price appends the following—

"Mass abductions" as presented in my novelette may sound too Hollywoodish for *Adventure* but there is precedent for what I wrote. Witness the following AP dispatch from Tarlac, Luzon, under date of 7/12/46—

Twenty Filipino women were kidnaped today at the nearby village of Mayantoc by an armed band which Philippine Army military police identified as members of the peasant guerrilla organization, the Hukbalahaps.

The military police said the kidnaping was apparently an aftermath of the clash between MPs and Huks near the village July 9 when 38 Huks and one MP were slain. Unable to provide a motive for mass abductions, the MP officials speculated it might have resulted from an attempt to "recruit" camp cooks and workers.

Meanwhile, at Lubao to the southward in Pampanga Province, a bloody clash between the Huks and a group of MPs reinforced with civilian guards went into its second day.

Reliable reports of yesterday's fighting said an entire detachment of 50 civilian guards had been slain. There was no estimate of casualties suffered by the Hukbalahaps.

MPs started using mortars today against the entrenched peasants who are equipped with .50 caliber machineguns.

Maj. Tiburcio Ballestros, Pampang Province provost marshal, reported the MPs and guards had the Huks surrounded and that their surrender was but a matter of time.

The Philippine Army reported in Manila that final surrender notices were being prepared for distribution to all Hukbalahap bands and that unless the ultimatum was accepted, "large scale action" would be taken.

Naturally, I endeavoured to build a story which will speak for itself and pull its own weight. I don't expect the above documentation to take the place of narrative interest but merely offer it as frosting in the hope that the cake beneath is worth chawing at. And, of course, we all know the Huk movement is centered in Luzon. This does not, however, make it illogical for someone to do a bit of Hukking around in Mindanao!

Now let me quote from *Time*, July 8, 1946: "In central Luzon, a 150,000 man army of ex-guerrillas, the Communist-led Hukbalahaps, bristles with arms and defiance to the Roxas regime. They make their own laws and fight for the Philippine Military Police. . . ."

For years, the *tao*—the tenant farmer, the peasant of the Philippines—has been getting the dirty end of the stick. Meanwhile, the landlords accumulated the *pesos*, and, along with the money-lenders, kept the *tao* burdened with debt. My old friend Major C. C. Staples, who spent something like ten years in the Islands, and during those years saw a good deal of action in Mindanao, keeping Moro outlaws reasonably peaceful, is no sentimentalist; and when it comes to Communism, he'd probably not assay more than two cents to the long ton. If even that much! Yet he says, "If ever a man had a genuine grievance, it is that poor devil of a *tao*, ridden by money-lenders and landlords. It's time he got his day in court—but unless he's careful about the sort of leadership he accepts, he'll end in worse shape than he now is. . . ."

A christening, a wedding, or a funeral: and the *tao*, having no financial sense at all, borrows all he can raise in order to make what he considers a proper showing. Or, he bets on the wrong bird at a cockfight. Or, there is illness and he has a legitimate need for money in excess of his normal scanty income. Whether from hard luck, or from plain, human folly, he falls into the hands of the "Chino" moneylender, whose rates would make the eyes of American loan-sharks bug out like golfballs: and the poor devil is hooked for life. Naturally, the sight of the well-dressed landlord gripes him. Hence Hukbalahaps.

After discounting genuine hard luck and genuine injustice, there remain ignorance and lack of financial judgment as causes for conditions breeding revolt. It is the *tao's* ignorance that Major Staples had in mind when he spoke of the dangers of scheming leaders, and of racketeers disguised as saviors of the Common Man.

My story is a fictionization of the possibilities suggested by a study of the Huckbalahap situation. My stand is neither for

nor against the Hukbalahaps of Luzon, simply because I do not know anything out of direct observation in the field; I don't know any more than you or anyone else can read in the papers, which is a not-so-left handed way of telling you I do not KNOW a damn thing. I want to make a clean distinction between KNOW and think, believe, deduce, infer, guess, hope, and the like.

One "reliable source of information" insists that the Huks are Communist-led. Another equally "reliable" source says that that statement is downright falsehood. A third says that while there is a Communist influence, the movement is not Communist. In view of this confusion, I deliberately avoided writing of the Luzon Huks, and instead, wrote of Mindanao racketeers who organized the local *taos* as a money-making scheme. In our own country, a like principle has been used so effectively that one can hardly doubt that it'd afford an even juicier graft among the more ignorant Filipinos, though in all justice, I do not believe that the *tao* is much more ignorant than a good many of our Joe Doakeses: the only difference being in the matter of literacy.

As for the characters: years ago, there was a Datu Amboluto; and quite a man, though he never approached the fame of Datu Piyang. The one here presented is entirely fictitious. However, his generosity in donating a surplus daughter is neither fantastic nor even uncommon. Datu Ryan is a composite derived from several sunshiners and eccentric military personalities who flourished in Mindanao something like thirty years ago. Carag, of course, is one of the "intellectuals" you can buy for a dime a dozen in the good old United States; he occurs in all countries. He is described in a native proverb which boils down to this: "Head in the clouds, pratt in the mud." Finally, that unnamed general: I have nothing specific to offer here, except this one little hint—if you meet sufficient generals, and particularly if you catch them without their stars, you'll accept my anonymous specimen as reasonably lifelike.

Now let the *Camp-Fire* crowd take over, and raise hell with the zoology, botany, geography, anthropology, and costuming; but don't find any faults with Amina. She's not only a lady, she's likewise the girl of my dreams!

WE think you'll be interested in the following exchange of correspondence between E. H. Douglas of Los Angeles, Calif. and Giff Cheshire, whose Columbia River steamboating story, "A Mug at Charley's," we published in our May issue. Apropos of the yarn—chip on shoulder—Douglas writes—

In commencement will state that I have read practically every number of *Adventure* since the first issue. During this time there have been many controversial matters settled by your experts and readers. Such little matters as whether wolves would or would not attack human beings. Whether bloodhounds are savage or gentle and will or will not attack those whom they overtake in practicing their profession. Whether there are or are not man eating sharks. Whether all marine engineers are Scottish and named "Mac." Have seen the statement that cold water would explode ships boilers "exploded." And other controversies settled.

Unfortunately I am an individual who desires exactness and reason in stories though they may be fiction. The matter of cold water causing an explosion when reaching the boiler has always spoiled the entire story for me regardless of how well it might have been written. There are a few little matters which I would be pleased to see straightened out—I am seeking information, as, remarkable as it may seem, I do not know everything, that is not quite everything!

In *Adventure*, May, 1946—"A Mug at Charley's" by Giff Cheshire—I quote, "They all piled into the room, and Prescott continued to smile. 'Harney, nobody realized what a fix the Sophie was in last night until Cap'n Cavender found some melted rivets under the boiler. Young Trumley admitted he was piling the wood in every which way. It's not his fault. He just never had any experience with an old type piece of machinery. But, Lord—when I think of what could've happened!' "

Is it possible to melt rivets out of a boiler with water in? I have been in intimate contact with locomotive boilers for thirty years, and have never heard of anything like that occurring. I do not deny the possibility, am merely asking for information.

I would be pleased to learn what particular way there is to place wood in a firebox? For many months I fired a stationary boiler in a mining camp and saw no difference in results because of the way I threw wood in, this in reference to position of wood in the firebox.

Mention is made of safety valves for boiler operating by hand. Has there ever been a time when safety valves on marine boilers have not operated automatically at the set pressure? I have read of safety valves on these boilers around one hundred years ago.

Incidentally, the barber of the tale was supposed to have prepared a shaving mug with the hero's name on in gilt letters. Is this part of the barbers' trade, to be an artist, or at least a sign painter or otherwise familiar with lettering? Also was the shop equipped with furnace or kiln for burning the glaze?

We passed the above along to the author who replies with the following well-documented screed—

Many thanks for your letter concerning "A Mug at Charley's," which opens up the mighty interesting problem of why so many steamboat boilers, back in the old days, were inclined to blow high, wide and handsome, with no warning and often with very little excuse. The questions you raise are ones which, I'm afraid, neither you nor I can answer conclusively.

I would like to point out that no actual explosion occurred in the story. It was the danger of an explosion, which turned out to have been narrowly averted apparently, that caused the characters to act as they did. The fictitious dangers to the old *Sophie* (which was carefully made an old-timer even at the time of the story) were based on accusations against the old iron steam boiler commonly made in her day, and the dangers that would have impressed Old Harney, in particular, whether or not they were scientifically valid.

Here are some objective facts of record in the newspapers of that day, with which these characters would have been impressed:

On January 8, 1854, on your neighboring San Francisco Bay, the steamboat *Ranger* let go, with three killed and five injured. The Coroner, upon that occasion, rendered a report that somebody had turned cold water into her overheated boiler which, it was stated, "would do it every time." Don't you suppose that at least for a while after that the engineroom crews on many a packet were a mite leery on the subject, even if decades later it was decided there was nothing to it?

At her wharf in San Francisco, on January 19, 1854 (less than a fortnight after the *Ranger's* little fit of temperament) the *Helen Hensley* was making haste to get under way for Benicia. She blew both ends out of her boilers. There were two fatalities, and you might be interested in the fact that a passenger was reported to have been carried by a flying mattress through the air to the wharf without being badly hurt. Here, the blowing of her boiler ends seems to suggest melting, defective or otherwise misbehaving rivets, though this is only a guess.

There were many other such disasters. The *Belle* blew up above Sacramento on Feb. 5, 1856, with a score killed, including her captain. The ferry *Contra Costa* let go on April 3, 1859, with a score of six killed and eighteen injured. Interesting to note is the fact that while she rated 65 pounds pressure, she had been carrying 42 pounds just before the explosion. On August 25, 1861, the *J. A. McClelland* went sky high, a mile below Knight's Landing and bound for Red Bluff, with fifteen dead and eight hurt, and she was only eight months old at the time. Then there was the *Ada Hancock*, the *Sophie McLean* and so on.

There were any number of such disasters, but I have picked only a few to emphasize the unpredictable nature of the things. They happened everywhere that steamboats were working, but I have stuck to your own California history.

The point I'm making is that steamboats blew up—so persistent was this habit that forward cabins (away from the boilers) cost more than those toward the center of the boat (where the boilers were located). Passengers and crews were understandably nervous. Boilers blew without warning and under such diversified conditions that nobody ever knew the exact cause. But there were theories and indications. Yes, one of them was cold water in a hot boiler. Slackening speed suddenly with a full head of steam was considered a very dangerous practice (at least with the old walking beam engines). There was a propensity for racing between packets, which often resulted in artificial and excessive stimulation to the fires. Rivets were believed to melt or otherwise soften or loosen themselves. There was much talk of defective iron, for after the Civil War and its excessive use of metals, the quality of the iron obtainable for boilers is reported to have been very poor. Sometimes safety valves (yes, the early packets had them) were deliberately obstructed for the purpose of building more steam and speed.

So to your specific questions. You ask if it's possible to melt rivets out of a boiler with water in it, and I check this to you. What would you say happened to the *Ranger* on 'Frisco bay, since we now know it wasn't cold water in a hot boiler (incidentally, they also thought "foamy" water was bad). What made the *Helen Hensley* blow both ends out of her boiler? And with the others? All we can say with certainty is that something gave, most lethally.

Your question as to the manner of firing seems to miss the point, though I understand that with wood or coal (even with a railroad locomotive) it does makes a difference. Careless firing under one of the old and unpredictable iron boilers could very easily result in a dangerous heat concentration. At least Old Harney had been conditioned to believe this by the opinions of his day and so was moved to try and stop it.

You ask if there has ever been a time when safety valves have failed to operate at the set pressure. That question is not raised in the story, but safety valves were by no means insurance against explosion. In the days of the low-pressure engine, before modern boilers with pressures ranging from 150 to 220 pounds came into wide use, a steamboat could run with a pressure as little as ten pounds. They probably averaged between that and around sixty pounds. And it was at this time that the worst explosions in steamboat history occurred. Jerry MacMullen, in his very readable "Paddle-Wheel Days in California" cites the instance of a packet blowing up with safety valve set at 24 pounds. It is logical that this was a very "safe" setting,

yet she blew. Because of this propensity, Old Harney did not trust the safety valve on the *Sophie*, and who could blame him? It was not indicated in the story that the safety valve had failed to work; only that Old Harney was alarmed and in a sweat to let off some steam. I ask you, wouldn't you have been?

I have tried to answer your questions as to the danger to the *Sophie* by referring you to the record. I admit that I do not answer them conclusively, and I cannot. In the story you challenge I went back to the opinions and fears that would have motivated the characters, and I submit that this is sound practice. If you can illuminate me on these mysteries of nearly a century ago I'd be glad to hear from you again.

Your final question about the barber, in the yarn, having himself done the lettering on the shaving mug he fixed for Old Harney is a little on the quibbling side. I gather that you did not grow up in a small western town. Few of them supported professional sign painters or "kilns for burning the glaze," yet they got their lettering done. I've seen my own father do a very passable job with a camel's hair brush and a pot of gilt.

Can any boiler-minded reader tell us why so many steamboats of an older era blew up under so many unfathomable conditions? If anybody knows for sure we'd be glad to have the answer flushed out from under the bushes so it can be barbecued over the *Camp-Fire*.

WE WERE mighty interested in the following communication from a 72-years-young ex-TTT whose comments anent Edgar Young's recent allusions to the fraternity of Typical Tropical Tramps should certainly stimulate additional reminiscence along the same lines from other *Camp-Fire* adherents—

Dead K. S. W.:—I rambled footloose and free through the world for about twenty years—Australia, Africa, Burma Coast, Germany, England, Holland, South Africa, and the Chinese Coast.

Sometime about 1900 I got on the beach in Callao, Peru, and was half-Shanghaied in company with a Swede engineer, on a German tramp steamer, *Kambries*. That is, I wasn't signed on but taken aboard to work as coal-passer for a huge pre-Hitler fireman named Hans Schultz.

Getting tired of "John Bool, John Bool, you son of a——" I exceeded my duties and instead of passing coal landed a haymaker on the fireman's square head which played havoc with my fist but only made him mad. He and the rest of the black gang came at me with everything from slice bars to sledges, but my Swede pardner rallied nobly to my aid; and after a struggle in which everything was used but cannon we were ejected overboard to swim to the beach at San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua.

There, while looking the cable station over, the smell of cooking food brought us to the kitchen with the idea of eats; and I met Ed Burke, who along with a Barbadian Negro was presiding over a somewhat dilapidated stove. Ed went with us to the chief operator and made such an eloquent plea that this individual agreed to provide us with three meals a day while we looked around.

It seems that Ed Burke's feet were already itchy, so he decided to put in with us. We concocted a scheme to hike across to Rivas on the Gran Lago, there commandeer, or temporarily borrow, a native sail-boat, across the lake to the east, float down the San Juan River on a raft, and work our way along the east coast to the States.

We walked the old '49er trail to Rivas, landing there by design in the small hours of the night. Picking up a fishing boat we quietly rowed her out of the harbor—but alas, daylight found us in a dead calm laying a few miles off the harbor, and we could see the other fishing boats putting out after us. Grabbing the sweeps we rowed frantically to a point of land a few miles south of the harbor and took to the jungles just as they arrived within range and began firing their blunderbusses in our direction.

Then followed a week of the most concentrated hell I have ever experienced. The air was full of mosquitoes and gnats, ticks and chiggers swarmed onto us from every bush, we saw real snakes of every size and hue and three-foot-long lizards, and the heat in the jungle was almost unbearable. Our tongues were soon lolling out from the thirst but we managed to find water three times in scummy pools and the only food we got was some wild oranges with skins an inch thick and the juice of which raised blisters on our lips. Finally, more dead than alive we stumbled upon an arm of the lake at a village. Filling up on garden stuff and some plantains that night we found an abandoned canoe that contained some fishing tackle and a net, and we faded into the darkness upon the Lago. To make a long story short, we paddled south to the shore where we left the lake and following an oxtrail we came at last to Managua where we split up. I eventually got back to San Juan del Sur where I met a man named White who owned a gold mine in the Legua del Flores where he gave me the job of assayer. I told him I was an expert assayer but I had to learn the job as I worked and this started me out as a miner.

In regard to Edgar Young's statement that Ed Burke originated the expression, TTT, Typical Tropical Tramp. This happened a long time ago when both Ed and I were young men and I really thought he was some kind of college guy looking for writing material; as especially if you threw a few drinks into him he would discuss

anything except Nuclear Energy, which hadn't been discovered yet.

I don't believe I would want to classify all foreigners in Central and South America under one title but I would divide them into three categories: 1. The beach-comber, who would be a beachcomber anywhere. 2. The sailor who frequented ports only waiting to ship for another session of biscuit and salt-horse; and who saw only the water-front and the lousy couches of the sailor boarding-houses. 3. The boomer. I was a boomer, Ed Burke was a boomer, Edgar Young was a boomer. Anyone who would rather look over the next hill than make a lot of money, boomed.

The boomer, real TTT, or workingman adventurer, is usually a man with more than ordinary energy and work capacity. But he is insubordinate and succeeds only by his own efforts, and rarely by employment by others. He comes, does his job with superlative efficiency, and you pat yourself on the back that you got hold of him. But, if it is in the north and a snowflake falls, or something else happens, he follows the wild geese. He is jack-and-master of many trades—today setting type or running a dredge, tomorrow shaking down a bunch of Mexican high-jackers, next day running a machine-gun for some nation that has a fighting chore to do.

You may meet him loafing south with no objective in view, just going; or high-tailing at a swifter pace towards Honduras and the benefits of no extradition. Or look for him in the steerage of some ship heading toward the Southern Cross, sitting on his saddle and blankets, enroute to the pampas.

I don't care where you land—Africa, the Americas, Australia, or other wide-open spaces; and if you have ten dollars in your pocket and no job in sight, you lend five dollars to a pal, blow the other four on a good dinner for the two of you, then with the lone dollar left you grin and cuss the country—you are a TTT, even if your shoes leak the snow in.

I went on the wallaby to the Lightning Ridge Opal Mines in Australia, spent my wages on zircon and blue sapphire, using my skill as a sailor in the old wind ships to get to another gem pocket. I went up the Irawaddy and bought hard pebbles from coolies all the way to Ceylon; and in Columbo I got to know the dealers and exporters. I spent the best part of my life not trying to make money but to see things and enjoy myself; and I consider myself a TTT, a Typical Tropical Tramp.

I don't consider a beach-comber, boozing pisco in Chile or bumming drinks along the waterfront of Frisco or the bund at Shanghai, a TTT. I call him a bum, only he can get more booze in Shanghai.

Under the smile of the TTT there is usually a hard streak, the streak of lean, and a kind of ruthless efficiency that makes him not easy to lead and impossible to drive. Thus he never makes a good employee, but will usually succeed in anything he undertakes on his own hook, if he sets his mind to it.

For example, at the start of the depression I lost a good business by bankruptcy caused by bank-failures, and I went down, down, down, and out. For a year I saw the inside of more jails than I like to think of on vag charges; and I knew the insides of many singlemen's relief stations. I had committed the great modern crime: TOO OLD, and factories and other places were singing that song, "Go Away Old Man Go Away!" I had forgotten the ways of getting work I once knew and went down to the dregs.

One day in Sacramento while standing dirty and ragged in front of a jeweler's window, I saw a customer buy some mineral specimens I had been staring at in the window. I entered hesitatingly and asked the jeweler if I knew where to mine most of the specimens he had if I could make a living selling them. He was a good guy and he told me he made about fifteen dollars a day on the side selling them, and he thought I could perhaps make a go of it.

My hard streak began working. Without a penny I made my way down the San Joaquin Valley, working any place I could for grub that would keep—coarse flour, rice, dried milk, anything I could carry on my back, then I hightailed it from Mojave to Bishop and then over the summit to Coaldale, Nevada; nearly losing my life in a snowstorm but being picked up by a railroad snow-plow crew who carried me to Mina.

The storm had covered the desert with snow until it was nearly impassable so I caught a freight to Tonopah where my luck changed and I got employment—room and board and 50c a day—my duties beginning at 3 A.M. as helper in a restaurant kitchen.

I scoured the city dump, finding there an old buggy and two large burned-out iron trunks. Throwing off the buggy-bed I nailed the trunks to the reach, and collected a cooking outfit consisting of cans and an old frying-pan. For bedding I made a sleeping-bag from old quilts. I was now outfitted for the desert.

Like a miser I saved every penny of cash, adding to my meager wages by acting as bouncer in a saloon-gambling-house where I received a dollar a night. By dint of working the clock around and by saving every cent I finally amassed a total of $23. The weather cleared up. With $11, I bought the cheapest grub—oatmeal, beans, flour, and coffee—and I started down the highway pulling behind me all my wordly goods loaded on the buggy.

At Millers' Siding I turned onto the Crow Springs road, heading into the Pilot Range in which I had formerly done some prospecting. I learned how to have a lot of sympathy for a horse as I hit the grade, but I struggled on until I was two miles from the top of the pass. I could pull the buggy no further up the grade!

Get away old man, get away! No, wait a minoote. With the hard streak in me working overtime I tied one wheel of the buggy, then using the shafts as a lever I pulled it in a quarter-circle until the wheels were straight across the road, then changing the rope I tied the upper wheel—and so, eight feet at an advance, I covered that awful two miles. I loaded my outfit into the buggy and pulled it in triumph to Sparks or Black Barrel Spring. I doubt if Samson did as much in the same time!

For three weeks I worked, visiting prospect holes and looking about for mineral specimens. I found turquoise, malachite, azurite, beautiful rock crystals. I loaded my buggy to capacity, then packed it to the summit and started my downward trip. Getting back to Miller's Siding, I pulled some lumber off the old mill and rebuilt my buggy with a longer bed, having the whole of a ghost town to draw on. Repacking the buggy, I used the back-end as a counter and over it I put the sign: "DESERT-RAT'S NEST."

I started north, pulling the buggy, and the tourists could not pass me up. They stopped, listened to my yarns, took my picture, and bought my specimens. At Hawthorne when I found myself in possession of $85, I bought a Ford Model-T and traveled that summer up to northern Montana, gathering opals, garnets, sapphires, copper-specimens. I then headed south, selling as I went.

This was the start of the "Desert Rat's Nest Gem Store" I have just closed at Pasadena. Now I import rubies and sapphires from Ceylon; aquamarine, beryl, topaz, and other gems, from Brazil; rare beryls from Madagascar; opals from Mexico and Australia, to fill a good-sized mail-order business. I now have helpers doing the work while I sit at ease here on the cliffs overlooking the ocean.

The point I want to bring out is my early hellling around the world put iron in my blood that would not let me stay licked, so I am glad of the days I spent as a TTT.

Most sincerely,
—George W. Chambers
Encinetas, Calif.
P. O. Box 1123

THANKS to Edward W. Hartung, Earl B. Powell of our *Ask Adventure* staff, H. V. Allen, Arthur C. Kemmis, H. S. of Schenectady and many other long-memoried readers, we were promptly able to track down the elusive serials a Hollywood story scout and Mr. J. A. Wilson of Ashland, Mass. asked us to identify for them, respectively, via this department. "Traitor's Bane" by Basil Carey, which began in these pages back in February '31, was the serial involving the schooner *Flying Spaniard* the movie man wanted to trace. And A. B. Higginson's "Wulfhere" was Mr. Wilson's yarn about Penda and the warrior who always traveled around in the company of white bears. The serial ran from the June 3 issue through the August 3 issue back in 1920.

Incidentally, Edward W. Hartung, whose familiarity with the content of early issues of our magazine has been immensely helpful on various occasions in circumstances similar to the above, tells us that his file of *Adventure* is complete from Vol. I No. 1 to the present with only five exceptions. He is missing the issues for Nov. and Dec. 1910 and the Jan., Feb. and Aug. 1911 issues. Anyone who has these magazines in good condition and wishes to dispose of them, get in touch with Mr. Hartung at 630 West Upsal St., Philadelphia, Pa., and make whatever arrangements with him are mutually agreeable.—K.S.W.

LOST TRAILS

NOTE: We offer this department to readers who wish to get in touch again with friends or acquaintances separated by years or chance. Give your own name and full address. Please notify *Adventure* immediately should you establish contact with the person you are seeking. Space permitting, each inquiry addressed to *Lost Trails* will be run in three consecutive issues. Requests by and concerning women are declined, as not considered effective in a magazine published for men. *Adventure* also will decline any notice that may not seem a sincere effort to recover an old friendship, or that may not seem suitable to the editors for any other reason. No charge is made for publication of notices.

I would like information as to the whereabouts of Donald W. Drilling, age 20 or 21 years, about 5' 7" tall, with light brown hair and brown eyes. He lived in Chicago before going into service. He was a member of the 121st Infantry Regiment, 8th Infantry Division during the war. Anyone having information please write to William E. Toth, 1204 Morrow Street, Pittsburgh 21, Pennsylvania.

Information urgently needed of the whereabouts of Lloyd Garrison (Gary) Patten, whose father is dangerously ill and wishes him to return home. He served in the R.C.A.F. as Pilot Officer from 1943 to 1945, then joined the Merchant Navy in Vancouver. He is believed to have headed East this summer, probably looking for other employment. Please send any information to Mervyn L. Patten, General Delivery, Duncan, British Columbia, Canada.

I would like to locate an old Army buddy, whose last name is Duncan. He is of Irish-German descent, speaks French. His home is in New York. He was formerly a member of the 1658th Ordnance Company, later the 1051st Ordnance Company, 41st Service Group, 12th Air Force. Please notify "Rosie" Robert Rosenfeld, 2814 Buckingham Road, Los Angeles 16, California.

I would appreciate any information about 1st. Sgt. John F. Golec, ASN 6810634. I served with him from 1940 to 1944 in the 1st and 76th Division. When last heard from he was with the 79th Division, but I think he has returned to the States now, and probably been assigned to another unit. Please write 1st. Sgt. Frank J. Meyer, 6906305, Co. A. 1st. Bn., P.J.G.H., Ft. Custer, Mich.

Want to hear from anyone knowing the whereabouts of Jimmy Black, with whom I served in the Canadian Army in 1940 and 1941. We were stationed together at Sherbrooke Motordrome and Camp Jacques Carter, in Montreal, and later he transferred from Camp Border, Ontario to an ordnance outfit in Ottawa. He had a married sister living at Stoney Point, near Montreal. Write to John S. Bradley, 106 East Isabella Street, Salisbury, Maryland.

Can anyone help me locate Tech. 5th grade Harold "Hap" Moen, formerly of Co. B. 338th Engineer G. S. Rgmt? He served in Africa and Italy from '43-'45. Lived at one time in Alaska and now lives, I believe, in Chicago, Ill. or vicinity. Please write Ernest "Shorty" Doane, 58 Childs St., Lynn, Mass.

I would appreciate any information concerning Eddie Jolly, son of Orrin Jolly, last known to have been in Virginia where his father was a foreman for the E. J. Albright Construction Co. Eddie would be about 21 or 22 now. I would also like to hear from Samuel Baily (or Bailey) and Robert Miller, who lived at Arkport, N. Y., both of whom are about 20 years old. Please write to William L. Morris, R. F. D. No. 1 Arkport, New York.

I would like to hear from anyone knowing the whereabouts of James Cornelius McCloud. He is about six feet tall, thin, has black hair, talks with a slight drawl. Has lived in Texas, Colorado and California and worked as a welder, hotel clerk and boxer. Last heard of in Denver, Colorado. Please write to John D. Reiss, 3726522, USNTC, SCC, Section B6-2, Barracks 301, Great Lakes, Illinois.

I would like to locate Alvin U. Hodgdon, known also as Tex Ranger. He plays the guitar, has black hair and slightly protruding front teeth. Anyone knowing his whereabouts, please write Lee Kay, Lake Jackson, Texas.

I would like to hear from anyone knowing the address of W. F. (Billie) Benz, who used to ride rodeo in California some years ago. He was last heard of in Willits, California. C. R. Douglas, 628 Del Mar, Pasadena 5, California.

Burch, Sgt. Joseph T., born and raised in Oklahoma, last known address 72nd A. B. Squdn., Kays Field, Columbus, Miss. Any information concerning "Joe" will be gratefully appreciated and acknowledged by his cousin, C. R. P. Marion, Box 1882, Balboa, Canal Zone.

Will anyone who served with Corporal William Yarian, Company B, 297th Engineer (C) Battalion in France, please write to his mother, Mrs. H. Yarian, 28411 Rollcrest Road, Route 1, Farmington, Michigan.

I would like to contact Jim [redacted] Sault Ste. Marie, who was [redacted] known to have been in St. Petersburg, Florida, [redacted] Please write E. Langdon, 2010 S.W. 16th Terrace, Miami, Florida.

This is to advise you that I have contacted Jim Langdon through your magazine for which I am forever grateful. With best wishes for your continued success, E. Langdon, Miami, Fla.

THE TRAIL AHEAD

Back to the Abyssinian hinterland to meet "Ack" Adair—cruel, ruthless, bellicose trouble-maker who'd slay a man merely because he didn't like the shape of his eyebrows—in the days long-gone before the Biblical Land of Cush had been officially dubbed Ethiopia. The man who gave us "The Hand of Herouba" in the August issue takes us once again to Addis Ababa on the trail of the greatest *maestro* of the gun the African Continent has ever known. In—

"JUSTICE AT JIJIGA"

By Kern L. Petc

—you'll get a taste of eye-for-eye retribution doled out in the land where that particular brand of legal redress had its inception—and in a manner Solomon himself could have found no fault with. A great complete novelette of the Dark Continent when it was suffering growing-pains of empire and every man and every nation pursued a dog-eat-dog-and-damn-the-natives policy to share her wealth.

And Sidney Herschel Small brings Koropok back in "The Year of the Dog" transplanting that famous counterfeit pariah from Japan to China to break a renegade war-lord's kidnap ring that had made the mistake of abducting U. S. Marines to facilitate their political double-cross. . . . Another hilarious Blue Pencil Club story by Franklin Gregory, "Kilroy Was Here," which gives the inside lowdown on that fantastic, legendary nonesuch. . . . Plus stories of the deep-sea divers by John Scott Douglas —of the desert prospectors of the American southwest by Paul Annixter—of Yank-occupied Germany by O. B. Myers—of the tramp freighters that ply the seven seas by Albert Richard Wetjen—another amusing Charley Hoe Handle yarn by Jim Kjelgaard—a Sacramento River-boating story by Steve Hall—and, of course, the usual unusual assortment of informative fact stories, features and departments you can expect to find each month only in the pages of—

Adventure

25c

ON SALE JANUARY 10th

(Continued from page 123)

Satando had let the current take him five hundred yards down before he booted his white pony up the opposite bank and away.

Mackenzie watched him go, breathing with the force of a bellows, shoulders heaving, jaw hanging loosely. One by one, they slowed beside him—Brace, McManus, Corliss, some of the scouts, and finally Jimmie Deer. No one spoke. There was nothing to say.

The white pony was a blob in the desert shadows of the dying day. It stopped moving, once, and its rider lifted an arm and waved.

Mackenzie just stared.

Jimmie Deer hitched around in his saddle and asked a question with his eyes. Mackenzie shook his head. "Too late, I'm afraid."

"Tonight, hah?" Jimmie persisted.

"No . . . not tonight, I'm afraid." He could hardly hear his own voice; a buzzing sound echoed in his ears when he tried to swallow. "Major Brace, we'll have Stables here, then make preparations to return." He lifted his eyes to the circle of faces, and they all looked alike to him. "We must cross the Rio Grande by tomorrow morning."

Only McManus hesitated. "We could still get him, Colonel."

"No, McManus." He decided not to put the blame on Cump Sherman. "I'll not jeopardize the regiment further." He glanced beyond the circle of faces at the wilted troopers who sat waiting for an order. "It might have a serious effect on discipline."

Later, as they pressed slowly through the night toward the Rio Grande, he turned to Brace, riding beside him, and said, speaking like a man in a trance, "Discipline begins with yourself. It has no emotion."

Brace nodded and thought, *You ought to know, soldier.*

The regiment rode on, dozing yet not asleep, conscious only of the present, the future a blank and the past forgotten.

THE END

AUTO BOOKS ON APPROVAL

CAN YOU FIX IT?
These wonder books tell step by step HOW to make difficult repairs and adjustments, how to keep a car at maximum efficiency, including latest improvements in car design and operation. Engine troubles and how to correct them well covered.

6 BIG VOLUMES
2800 pages, 2000 illustrations, wiring diagrams, etc., including Diesel Engines. Beautiful modernistic, washable cloth binding.

SEND NO MONEY. Just mail the coupon for a complete set of Six Big Auto Books, 20th Edition. Whether you are a mechanic or helper, expert or apprentice, auto owner or driver, take immediate advantage of this FREE EXAMINATION OFFER.

MAKE GOOD MONEY NOW
HOLD A PERMANENT JOB

America wants its automobiles kept in good repair. Men with "know how" are in demand, at big pay. These books will help you get and hold an important job, or give you a chance to go into business for yourself now or later. Any man who half tries to improve himself can learn auto servicing and repairing by this quick reference method. Use the JIFFY INDEX to find easily understood answer to any auto problem. These wonder books prepared by eleven of America's great automobile engineers. Many hundreds of valuable illustrations. Send the coupon TODAY.

[A year's consulting privileges with our engineers now given with these books without extra charge.]

Vocational Publishers Since 1898

AMERICAN TECHNICAL SOCIETY, Dept. A131
Drexel Ave. at 58th St., Chicago 37, Ill.
I would like to examine your Six-Volume Set of Auto Books. I will pay the delivery charges only, but if I choose I may return them express collect. If after 10 days' use I prefer to keep them, I will send you $2 and pay the balance at the rate of only $3 a month until $24.80 has been paid. Please include consulting service as offered above.
Name .....
Address .....
City ..... State .....
Please attach letter stating age, occupation, employer's name and address, and name and address of at least one business man as reference. Men in service, also please give home address.

Again Available!
TWENTY GRAND RAZOR BLADES 10¢ PER Package
WORLD'S PRODUCTS CO., Spencer, Ind.

$2.50 by the year

CLEAR as a switchman's lamp. You get straight-from-the-shoulder, entertaining railroad facts, photo features and fiction in—

RAILROAD MAGAZINE
205 E. 42nd St., New York City 17

Now A DYNAMIC HEAVY DUTY INDUSTRIAL WELDER

FOR ONLY $23.50 COMPLETE...

IDEAL AND PRACTICAL GIFT FOR ANY MAN

IDEAL FOR AUTO - HOME APPLIANCE AND FARM REPAIRS

DESIGNED TO DO HIGH GRADE WELDING INEXPENSIVELY—Maintenance Men; Farmers; Mechanics; Machine Shops; Foundries; Auto, General Repair and Job Welding Shops; all using the DYNAMIC find it so indispensable and useful that they cannot afford to be without it. If inexperienced, you can easily learn to do a variety of high grade welding jobs by following the practical, simplified operating and welding instructions furnished. Once you see a DYNAMIC in operation, you won't want to be without it. Its simplicity will amaze you. In a year the DYNAMIC only costs you about 6c a day. Helmet, rods, cables, holder and operating instructions, etc., furnished.

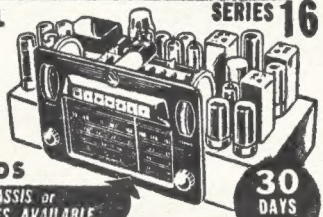
SAVES YOU VALUABLE TIME AND MONEY!

This portable DYNAMIC WELDER—easily carried to the job—can be operated from any convenient, properly wired 110 volt, 60 cycle line. Can also be supplied for 220 volt, 60 cycle operation and for other voltages and cycles at slight additional cost. Works on IRON, STEEL, BRASS, BRONZE, AND OTHER METALS—has 8 metallic and carbon arc welding heat stages—does work you would think only possible with larger more expensive machine.

WRITE TODAY FOR PARTICULARS
Get details on our 10 day trial offer

Member Chicago Association of Commerce

DYNAMIC WELDER CO. • 13 East 23rd St., NG, Chicago 16, Ill.

MIDWEST RADIOS
at Greater-Than-Ever VALUES
BIG, POWERFUL WORLD-RANGING CHASSIS with F M (Frequency Modulation) 5 WAVE BANDS
SERIES 16

SEPARATE CHASSIS or COMPLETE CONSOLES AVAILABLE
30 DAYS TRIAL
The SYMPHONY GRAND A M – F M RADIO-PHONOGRAPH CONSOLE

A magnificent radio and musical instrument that is completely new—from the ground up. Big, powerful Series 16 Chassis brings in long wave, short wave and FM reception...an automatic record-changing phonograph...and scores of NEW Post-war features.
SEND FOR FREE CATALOG
BUY DIRECT FROM FACTORY and SAVE!
FILL IN COUPON AND MAIL TODAY OR JUST SEND YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS ON 1¢ POSTCARD
MIDWEST RADIO CORPORATION
Dept. 22-B, Cincinnati 2, Ohio
Gentlemen: Please send me your new FREE Catalog and details of Your Liberal 30 Days' Trial!
NAME
STREET
CITY ZONE STATE

ANYONE CAN DO THIS IF THEY HAVE OUR CHART

SPECIAL OFFER FOR AGENTS
Blue Print 27"x36" now printed on both sides showing squares full size. Shows how to find the length of any rafter, find any angle in degrees, frame any polygon 3 to 16 sides, read the board foot and brace tables, octagon scale, rafter tables, many other uses can be scaled down for model work as well as full scale framing. Also chart changing pitches to degrees. For use with radial saws. About 13 square feet of printed copy. Sent post paid for $1. Money order or check—no stamps. MASON ENGINEERING SERVICE, 2104 N. Burdick St., Dept. 1, Kalamazoo, 81, Mich.

HUNTING and FISHING

HUNTING & FISHING
is a monthly magazine crammed full of hunting, fishing, camping, dog and boating stories and pictures, invaluable information about guns, fishing tackle, game law changes, best places to fish and hunt—countless ideas that will add more fun to your days afield.
Special Trial Offer
Send 25c in stamps or coin and we will send you Hunting & Fishing for six months.
HUNTING & FISHING
MAGAZINE, 250 Sportsman's Bldg., Boston, Mass.

(Continued from page 53)

wound. With a shriek of mortal terror, the pony wheeled away and galloped farther into the ravine. Bringing up heavily against the far wall it stopped and set up a fierce spasm of trembling. Mike dismounted and examined the piebald's injuries. The rents were deep and many and the blood streamed from them all, but they'd get home all right.

Riding slowly back to the flat Mike saw blood-spots on the rock surfaces where the red kangaroo had been and by these he knew how seriously the 'roo had been hurt. But the blood spots led across the flat and into the ranges and the piebald was in no mood for a fresh encounter.

A wistful expression spread across Mike's eyes as he reined in at Gaudry's and gave the ranger back his Winchester.

"I'll be keepin' this 'ere permit for a while, Mr. Gaudry," Mike said. "Maybe till after the winter. It's damn cold out there on the Kowmung." He paused and stroked the rifle. "She's as true as true, that rifle, sir. Thanks for the lend."

"Better give me the permit, Mike," the ranger said. "I'll look after it till you're wantin' to use it again."

TOWARDS the end of the winter the scarcity of natural feed on the flats and in the valleys drove the kangaroo mobs towards the settled places round Upper Burragorang and often the 'roos would be found helpless and dying along the boundary fences, their bodies gaunt and thin and all their bush instincts abandoned in the search for food.

On a morning in October Mike saddled the piebald and rode down towards Water Creek where there were always a few straying sheep to be found.

There he came upon a red kangaroo that looked up at his coming and began to stumble along the track a few yards ahead of him. There was sufficient instinct left to keep the 'roo stumbling along like that for more than a mile. Had Mike desired it the piebald could have overhauled the red kangaroo in a few cantered strides. But Mike left the track and rode down the creek to where the sheep were.

In the afternoon he called on the ranger.

"He's down by Water Creek," Mike said. The ranger seemed to know what Mike meant, for he went into his office and reappeared bearing in his hands the permit to kill.

Mike smiled and slowly shook his head.

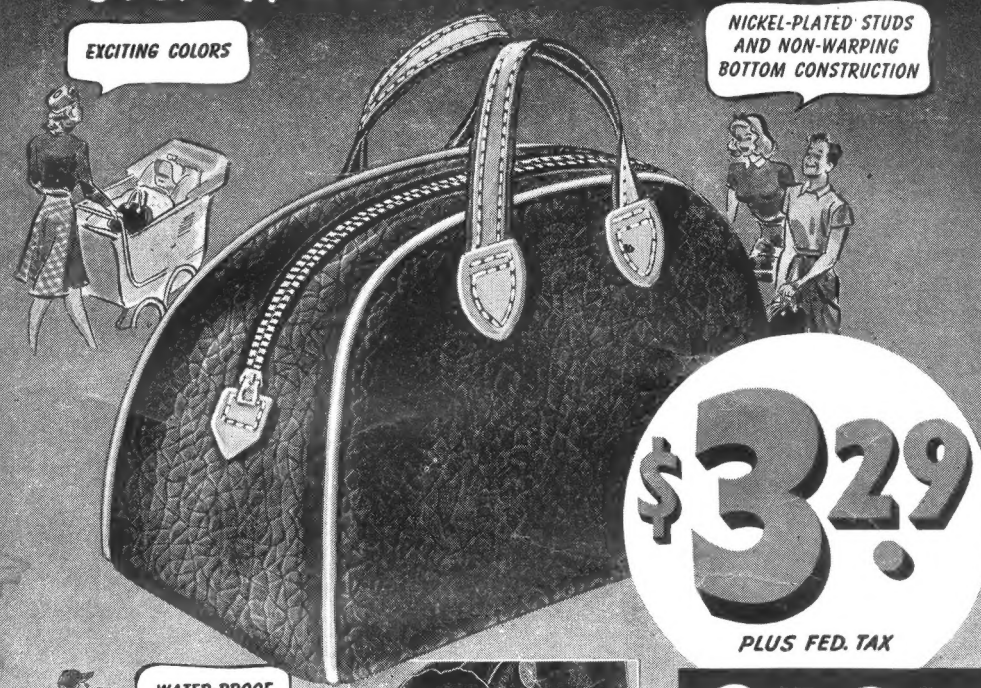
"You c'n keep that," he said. "I ain't feelin' like doin' no murder today, Mr. Gaudry, sir. Maybe if he picks up in the spring . . ."

THE END

Par-Pak.. THE MOST SENSATIONAL VALUE ever offered in a UTILITY BAG!

EXCITING COLORS

NICKEL-PLATED STUDS AND NON-WARPING BOTTOM CONSTRUCTION



$3.29

PLUS FED. TAX

Par-Pak

atlantic

WATER-PROOF PLASTIC COATED FABRICS AND PLASTIC WELTS

REPLACEMENT OR REFUND OF MONEY
Guaranteed by Good Housekeeping
IF DEFECTIVE OR NOT AS ADVERTISED THEREIN

PATENTED NO-SAG AERO-FRAME*

PADDED HANDLES WITH GENUINE LEATHER SUPPORTS AND PULL TABS

You can no more help "going" for these many big Par-Pak features than the whole family can help going for its "1000 use" versatility. Built *roomy* with *plus* smartness...plus durability...plus value...by the makers of the unique and famous Val-A-Pak. Stays in shape *permanently* because of the patented NO-SAG AERO-FRAME*...Ideal for overnight trips and "gadabout" activities the year round, Par-Pak is available in brown, blue and sand duck—and black or brown simulated leather.

ATLANTIC PRODUCTS CORPORATION, TRENTON 5, NEW JERSEY

*U. S. Pat. No. 1999424; Atlantic Products Corporation, Exclusive Licensee.

Put in your when the fall—and forget it till the first

F C

● You don't *guess* with "Prestone" anti-freeze; you ***know*** you're safe from freeze-ups, no matter how suddenly the thermometer dives. There's no boiling away or foaming off . . . no constant adding and testing. It prevents rust and corrosion too! Because there's not enough "Prestone" anti-freeze for everyone this year, you'd better get yours early . . . see your dealer on that first chilly day. You'll have never a care till the warm days of spring—with "Prestone" anti-freeze.

The words "Eveready" and "Prestone" are registered trade-marks of

NATIONAL CARBON COMPANY, INC.

30 East 42nd St., New York 17, N. Y.

Unit of Union Carbide UCC *and Carbon Corporation*

SORRY— there still isn't quite enough "Prestone" anti-freeze for all who want it, because-

1 "Prestone" anti-freeze, like most other products, depends on the utilization of raw materials and equipment drawn from many fields. Recent industrial dislocations have affected our plant-expansion program, which was not authorized during the war. Planned for years, it is well advanced; but the real benefit will not be felt in 1946.

2 "Prestone" anti-freeze must be produced and *packaged* long before cold weather. Last spring and summer the food shortage diverted packaging materials to the need of starving millions, and adversely affected our ability to meet 1946 requirements. So your dealer may be selling "Prestone" anti-freeze from 5-gallon cans in addition to the familiar 1-gallon cans.

SAME PRODUCT
$2.65 PER GALLON
SAME PRICE

PRESTONE ANTI-FREEZE

TRADE-MARK

"YOU'RE SAFE AND YOU KNOW IT!"—ONE SHOT LASTS ALL WINTER